



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Thursday, March 26, 2015**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, March 26, 2015

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

•(1005)

[*English*]

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST CODE

**The Speaker:** Pursuant to section 15(3) of the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons, it is my duty to lay upon the table the list of all sponsored travel by members for the year 2014 for the supplement as provided by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

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### INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation at the Canadian section of ParlAmericas respecting its participation at the bilateral visit held in Cartagena, Medellin, and Bogota, Colombia, February 6-13, 2015.

\* \* \*

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 34th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs concerning the question of privilege regarding the free movement of members within the parliamentary precinct.

#### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 9th, 10th, and 11th reports of the Standing Committee on National Defence in relation to the order in council nominations of John Forster to the position of Deputy Minister of National Defence, John Turner to the position of Associate Deputy Minister of National Defence, and Greta Bossenmaier to the position of Chief of the Communications Security Establishment.

#### GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 9th report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates in relation to its study of the certificate of nomination of Joe Friday to the position of Public Sector Integrity Commissioner. The committee has examined the qualifications and competence of the nominee and agrees that the nomination of Joe Friday as Public Sector Integrity Commissioner be concurred in.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### FACILITATING THE TRANSFER OF FAMILY FARM OR FISHING CORPORATIONS ACT

**Ms. Francine Raynault (Joliette, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-661, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (transfer of family farm or fishing corporation).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to submit to the House the study of the facilitating the transfer of family farm or fishing corporations act.

Many of the farm and fishing corporations in Canada exist because of families that have sacrificed everything for their passion. I know farmers in my region who live on land that has been passed down through nine generations. This bill will help these families keep their traditions alive by recognizing the interdependence that unites the brothers and sisters who take up the torch.

This minor but essential correction to the Income Tax Act will facilitate the intergenerational transfer of agricultural corporations. Many people in the agricultural sector have been asking for this change, and it is critical to the economy of our regions.

I hope that my colleagues will join me in supporting our farmers and implementing a simple solution to a serious problem. Having been a farmer myself, I am very happy to be introducing this bill.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### PUBLIC SECTOR INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC)** moved:

That, in accordance with subsection 39(1) of the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act, and pursuant to Standing Order 111.1, the House approve the appointment of Joe Friday as Public Sector Integrity Commissioner for a term of seven years.

*Routine Proceedings*

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [Translation]

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried on division.  
(Motion agreed to)

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**PETITIONS**

## AGRICULTURE

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I wish first to table three petitions from residents of Alberta calling on Parliament to respect the rights of small-scale family farmers to preserve, exchange, and use seeds, and to adopt policies supporting those same rights in the global south.

## ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition from hundreds of residents across Alberta calls on Parliament to call a full national public judicial inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women.

## AIDS

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to rise today to present two petitions.

The first is from residents of British Columbia and Manitoba, calling on the House to assemble a national strategy on AIDS, focusing on the principle of treatment as prevention. I table this petition.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from residents of British Columbia, Ontario, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island. The petitioners are calling on this House to reject all aspects of Bill C-51 that fail to respect Canadian constitutional rights; and to ensure that any new legislation actually focuses on making us safer by fighting terrorism as opposed to what this bill would do, make us less safe while trampling on our rights.

## ASBESTOS

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to introduce a petition signed by literally tens of thousands of Canadians who call upon the House of Commons here and Parliament assembled to take note that asbestos is the greatest industrial killer that the world has ever known and, in fact, that more Canadians now die from asbestos than all other industrial and occupational causes combined.

Therefore, these petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to ban asbestos in all of its forms; institute a just transition program for asbestos workers in the communities they live in; end all government subsidies of asbestos in Canada and abroad; and stop blocking international health and safety conventions designed to protect workers from asbestos, such as the Rotterdam Convention.

## AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada and the House of Commons to adopt international aid policies that support small farmers, particularly women, and recognize their vital role in the struggle against hunger and poverty, as well as to ensure that Canadian policies and programs are developed in consultation with small family farmers, and that they protect the rights of small family farmers in the global south to preserve, use and freely exchange seeds.

●(1010)

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Isabelle Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to present a petition in the House today. This petition has been signed by hundreds of people who are calling for the owner of the *Kathryn Spirit* to complete the work as soon as possible for the seaway. This wreck has been moored in Lac Saint-Louis, which borders my riding, since 2011. The petitioners also want assurances that the boat will be safely towed out of Canadian waters before the seaway closes for the season. It is very important that the government take action on this as soon as possible.

[English]

## AGRICULTURE

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition today signed by a large number of people in and around Regina who call upon the Government of Canada to adopt international aid policies that support small family farmers, especially women. The petitioners also encourage the government to ensure that the rights of small farmers, particularly in the global south of the world, are respected with regard to the preservation, use, and free exchange of seeds.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The first is signed by hundreds of people in Vancouver Kingsway and the Lower Mainland calling on this Parliament to recognize the inherent rights of farmers derived from thousands of years of custom and tradition to save, reuse, select, exchange, and sell seeds.

The petitioners are concerned about current and newly proposed restrictions on farmers' traditional practices resulting from commercial contracts and legislation that criminalize these practices and harm farmers, citizens, and society in general.

*Government Orders*

## CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition follows my Motion No. 558 in this House calling on the current government to negotiate 10-year multiple-entry visas for Canadians to go to China, which I would congratulate the government on adopting. This is an important measure that will help millions of Canadians over the years ahead, help business, help families unite, and encourage tourism and cultural exchanges.

I want to table these petitions because it was the efforts of thousands of Canadians across this country pushing the government that resulted in this positive—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please.

The hon. member for Châteauguay—Saint-Constant.

[*Translation*]

## AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to present a petition signed by hundreds of people in and around my riding. They are concerned about the rights of small family farmers to preserve, exchange and use seeds. The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to adopt international aid policies that support small farmers, and especially women, and recognize their vital role in the struggle against hunger and poverty. They also want assurances that Canada's policies and programs will be developed in consultation with small farmers and that those policies protect the rights of small farmers in the global south to preserve, use and freely exchange seeds.

[*English*]

## SCIENCE

**Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition signed by dozens of citizens from across the country. The petition calls on the Government of Canada to support my bill, Bill C-558, which would establish a non-partisan parliamentary science officer.

The petition also notes that since 2006, the federal government has undermined scientific integrity, ignored scientific evidence, and unduly muzzled scientists working in the public service. An independent science watchdog would provide Parliament with expert advice on scientific matters.

While I cannot say whether I support this petition, I urge the government to stop its war on science and support my bill.

[*Translation*]

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House to present a petition on behalf of hundreds of people in Sherbrooke who are calling on the federal government to use all of the diplomatic resources at its disposal to secure the release of blogger and prisoner of conscience Raïf Badawi. Since his family has sought refuge here in Canada, the petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to take action and do everything it can to secure his release and reunite him with his family here in Canada.

● (1015)

[*English*]

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

## MILITARY CONTRIBUTION AGAINST ISIL

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC)** moved:

That, whereas:

- (i) the terrorist group known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has repeatedly called on its members to target Canada and Canadians at home and abroad;
- (ii) ISIL poses a clear and active threat to the people of the Middle East, including members of vulnerable religious and ethnic minority groups who have been subjected to a brutal and barbaric campaign of sexual violence, murder, and intimidation by ISIL;
- (iii) unless confronted with strong and direct force, the threat that ISIL poses to Canada and to international peace and security, will grow;
- (iv) Canada desires, consistent with Canadian values and interests, to protect the vulnerable and innocent civilians of the region, including through urgent humanitarian assistance;
- (v) the Government of Iraq has requested military support against ISIL from members of the international community, including from the Government of Canada;
- (vi) Canada is part of a broad international coalition of allies and partners, including numerous countries of the Middle East, committed to the fight against ISIL;
- (vii) the United Nations Security Council remains seized of the threat posed by international terrorism with the unanimous passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2178;
- (viii) the deployment of Royal Canadian Air Force assets has played an important role in degrading, destabilising, and weakening ISIL's position and operations in the region;
- (ix) the advise and assist mission of the Canadian Special Operations Forces in Northern Iraq has increased the capabilities of Kurdish-Iraqi Security Forces to combat ISIL; and
- (x) continuing to degrade ISIL will require striking its operations and infrastructure where they are located, including in Syria;

Accordingly, this House:

- (a) continues to support the Government's decision to contribute Canadian military assets to the fight against ISIL, and terrorists aligned with ISIL, including air strike capability with authorisation to conduct airstrikes in Iraq and Syria;
- (b) supports the Government's decision to extend the mission to a date not beyond March 30, 2016;
- (c) notes that the Government continues not to deploy troops in a ground combat role; and
- (d) offers its resolute and wholehearted support to the brave men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces who stand on guard for all of us.

*Government Orders*

He said: Mr. Speaker, over the last year we have witnessed the growth of global extremism and brutality. It has shocked Canadians, and it has compelled their government to act.

Instability plaguing Syria continues to spill across the borders with refugee camps the size of cities emerging throughout the region. I visited one of those camps just a couple of weeks ago in northern Iraq and spoke to the Yazidis, Syrian Christians and others. They recounted their tales of horror.

I rise before this House to report that of all those I have met, those who were persecuted, people are on the run because the tyranny that was about to be levied on them was too great to bear. Indeed, the campaign that the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant has launched is also being felt around the world, from North Africa to South Asia, from social media to the streets in front of our own Parliament.

ISIL's campaign threatens Canadian citizens. It threatens the very foundation upon which our society is based. It does so through fear, oppression and tyranny. It does so through a culture of violence, ruling by brutal and barbaric intimidation.

Although the threat of terrorism continues to evolve, our reaction to this threat persists as the greatest test for this generation. This is fundamentally a test of our values, of our national character and a test of our will as a country and as a nation. The resolve of Canadians has carried us through wars and depressions, through hard times and through great uncertainty.

Like every other test of tyranny, Canadians will rise to the moment. My faith in our country to meet this moment with moral clarity, as we have in every other moment that has defined our nation, will never be diminished.

The scale of ISIL's ambition cannot be overstated. From between the ancient Euphrates and Tigris rivers, these brutal terrorists seek to establish a caliphate from which it promises territorial expansion and religious persecution.

We know that ISIL has set upon the task of organizing their campaign of atrocities. In areas where they operate from inside Syria, they enslave countless people, many Muslims, under the so-called Sharia-based courts. They fashioned a so-called capital for themselves inside Syria in the ancient city of Raqqa, once the capital of the Abbasid caliphate. Their leadership al-Baghdadi has crowned himself a so-called caliph while preaching his perversion of Islam from a Mosul mosque.

What has come of this? In their wake, they have a left an unprecedented humanitarian crisis drenched in the blood of the persecuted: millions of refugees, including religious minorities, fleeing for their lives across the region; brutal mass executions, surmountable to war crimes; the widespread use of rape and sexual violence against women and children; the emergence of slave markets where minority women are bought and sold as sex slaves by violent terrorists; the destruction of ancient relics and treasured religious heritage.

Just over six months ago, the world witnessed the Yazidis, who braved the heat with nothing but the clothes on their backs, as they made their way up Mount Sinjar surrounded by ISIL. We witnessed

the Syrians being forced from the Nineveh Plains, their ancestral homeland, and early churches desecrated as they sought shelter in schools and churches in northern Iraq.

We pray for those who were unable to escape, those who have fallen into ISIL's tyranny, and those who have been murdered by ISIL's gangsters or enslaved by ISIL's thugs. We pray that their families know justice, that our efforts from our afar offer some comfort.

Needless to say, this is one of the greatest humanitarian catastrophes of our century thus far. Let me be clear, this catastrophe was not caused by an act of nature. It was created by acts of unambiguous evil inspired by a fanatical ideology. ISIL is based on an ideology of hatred and brutal persecution, one that seeks to erase a history of cultural diversity and pluralism, and rewrite it based on a depraved narrative that utterly rejects the inherent dignity of every human being.

However, ISIL's ideology is not limited to Iraq and Syria alone. Beyond the region, it has inspired a cult of violence with a global reach. Left unchecked, this terrorist threat is sure to grow and continue to grow quickly. Indeed as recent events have shown, Canada is not immune to ISIL's ideology. While the loudest threats emanate from abroad, they exist here at our home and have been felt in these very halls.

● (1020)

As our Prime Minister has noted, ISIL seeks to destroy the kind of open, free, diverse society that Canadians have chosen and have defended throughout our history. As this menace grows, so too does our responsibility to act to do our part in defence of human dignity and values.

In his response to the statement of the Prime Minister in the House on Tuesday, the leader of the Liberal Party stated that our government's case must be, "based on clear and reliable, dispassionately presented facts". The facts are clear. ISIL has declared war on Canada by name and seeks to wage its jihad against our people. No matter how these facts are communicated, Canadians know that the leaders of the opposition parties will dismiss them and with that are dismissing Canadian values.

[*Translation*]

Canadians want their government to take action, and that is exactly what we are doing.

[*English*]

Over the last six months, in concert with our western and regional allies, like the United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Jordan, we have been standing in support of the Iraqi state to maintain stability in the region and to halt ISIL's campaign of terror in Iraq.

*Government Orders*

As my colleague, the Minister of National Defence, will more fully describe, we have provided valuable military resources to the coalition. Through our combat mission, Canada is degrading ISIL's operations and is advising and assisting those who aim to reclaim ISIL-held territory. However, as our government has consistently said, a military contribution is only part of Canada's response. In fact, our government is pursuing a multi-faceted approach in the face of this crisis. We are acting with both compassion and strength. That is what standing up for Canada means.

Through our humanitarian support, Canada has provided food to 1.7 million people, shelter and relief supplies to another 1.2 million in need, and has improved access to education for up to 500,000 children. Our assistance has helped to provide four million litres of kerosene to 23,000 families across Iraq.

● (1025)

[Translation]

Our assistance has also helped to provide safe drinking water for 760,000 people, half of them children.

[English]

We have provided hygiene kits for 466,000 people. We have provided rapid life-saving assistance to over 240,000 highly vulnerable people through UNICEF's rapid response mechanism. With the onset of winter, we have reached almost 60,000 children with warm clothing and materials. Almost 1.5 million people received food assistance through our support through the World Food Programme. We have also helped support Syrian refugees in Iraq with food, water, shelter and protection.

While in Erbil this month, I visited one of the refugee camps and saw first-hand the devastation caused by this crisis. However, I also saw Canadians providing medical aid at a clinic funded by the Canadian government. Seeing the tangible difference we are making to the victims of ISIL is a reminder to everyone of the important humanitarian assistance Canada is rightfully providing.

[Translation]

Indeed, Canada is ranked sixth among the major donors of humanitarian aid to Syria, and fifth in aid to Iraq. This makes Canada one of the largest per capita donors in the world.

[English]

We are also providing support and protection for survivors of sexual violence and assisting those targeted on the basis of their faith.

Canada must continue to address the growing abuse of women and girls, bringing justice and relief to survivors, and ensure that perpetrators are ultimately held to account. These actions are abhorrent violations of the most basic principles of civilization and of human decency.

Together, we are proud of the efforts that Canada and our coalition partners are doing to help millions of innocent civilians recover from ISIL's terror. In addition, and in concert with our coalition partners, we are working to disrupt ISIL's illicit financing, counter extremist narratives, and stem the flow of foreign fighters to and from the front lines.

Through our diplomatic efforts, Canada has also heightened its engagement with regional leaders. In the last weeks, I have met with our allies in the United Arab Emirates, Jordan and Iraq, including the Kurdistan region, and we will continue to work closely with them.

In the face of this ongoing humanitarian catastrophe, more will need to be done. Our government will ensure that more will continue to be done.

I can assure Canadians that our government intends to provide large-scale humanitarian and stabilization assistance to help alleviate the suffering this terror group is inflicting. However, in order for this assistance to be effective, we must degrade ISIL. This is why we seek the support of this House for our decision to extend and expand Canada's military mission for up to one year so that, with our allies, we can continue to fight Islamic jihadism, which threatens both national and global security.

Although we have seen ISIL's capacities degraded, we continue to see it move its fighters and material across the border into Syria. We cannot permit violent ideologies to fester in ungoverned spaces. ISIL cannot have a safe haven.

This is why seek support to join our allies, who have been attacking ISIL in Syria. We ask that the Canadian Armed Forces conduct air strikes against ISIL targets in Syria on the same basis as our coalition allies: the threat that ISIL poses to Iraq.

Our air strikes in Syria have one goal and one goal only, and that is to degrade ISIL. These threats cannot be wished away by pious rhetoric. Canada will not choose to stand on the sidelines during a crisis that demands both strength and compassion.

● (1030)

[Translation]

The road ahead will not be without obstacles.

[English]

The region's deep-seated ethnic and sectarian divisions will not be resolved overnight. The volatile security environments of Iraq and Syria will not be easily stabilized, and the humanitarian crisis that afflicts these nations, sadly, cannot be reversed at once. While we are working with our closest friends and trusted partners, there are others who are pursuing their own agendas at the expense of our shared goals of lasting stability and unity.

We harbour no delusions about these obstacles, but the fact remains, in responding to this threat, Canada stands at a crossroad in history. We may either stand on the sidelines or take real and measured actions.

ISIL's barbarity is an affront to human dignity and to the civilized world. It threatens the very principles that shape Canada's national identity and guide our engagement on the global stage. Its violent ideology and expansionist agenda jeopardize Canadian interests and threaten Canadian citizens.

*Government Orders*

When Canadian values and Canadian citizens are under siege, we cannot afford to stand on the sidelines and preach moral virtue. We cannot speak of supporting the mission and our soldiers in one breath while voting against them in the next. These serious and consequential times call for serious and consequential leadership.

[*Translation*]

We must act with compassion, with strength and with moral clarity. We must defend what is right.

[*English*]

In partnership with our coalition allies, Canada is working across multiple lines of effort to halt ISIL's campaign of terror and restore the stability that those in the region so greatly deserve.

Our resolve in this operation remains strong. Let me be clear, our commitment is ultimately to the people of Syria and Iraq for whom terror and tyranny have been inflicted, and for whom must remain the promise of a future in peace and freedom.

With that, I urge all members of the House to support this motion.

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government had taken the position, first of all, that we were going to go to Iraq for 30 days to advise and assist, but then we went into a six-month mission, which was to engage in combat, but not to accompany any Iraqi forces to the front lines, to engage in combat or to do anything of that nature on the ground. Yet, that is what happened.

Now we are there for another year, but that is not the end. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of National Defence and the Prime Minister have said that we will be there for the long haul.

This mission has no end. In fact, today we are hearing different objectives from the Minister of Foreign Affairs than we have heard from the Minister of National Defence, who is talking about not degrading ISIL but defeating ISIL.

What is the objective of the Conservative government? Do the Conservatives plan to keep shifting the sand when it suits them, or are they going to have a defined objective so that the people of Canada would then know how long we might be in this war?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson:** Mr. Speaker, that is exactly one of the things this government has done. We have been open and transparent. We have given continual upgrades to the public and to the members of the opposition and we have brought this matter before Parliament.

It could be argued that this is within the crown's prerogative, and it certainly is within the crown's prerogative. However, the government has placed these matters before the House of Commons for its support, and I think appropriately so, so that Canadians can be aware of exactly what we are doing.

As you read out the motion before this House, Mr. Speaker, it is very clear. We are extending this mission up to a year. We will continue with our special forces and their advise and assist role with the Kurdish peshmerga, and we will extend the air strikes of the Royal Canadian Air Force in concert with our allies from Iraq into Syria as well.

We have made progress and we have been very upfront with that. ISIL is in the process of being degraded. They have withdrawn from certain areas and have been confined to certain areas. They have had equipment and individuals destroyed.

That said, we cannot let them have free rein in Syria. We cannot have a situation that allows them to cross the border, and that is exactly what we are aiming at with this motion.

• (1035)

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party has been clear that it is not in the Canadian national interest to enter into a combat mission in Syria when the combat mission that has been proposed there is unfocused and potentially unending.

I did not hear anything in the minister's comments that would clarify what the on-the-ground objectives are—"degrading ISIL" is pretty broad—or what an exit strategy for Canada might be in this conflict. In fact, when Evan Solomon, on *Power & Politics*, asked the Minister of National Defence who would take over should ISIL be cleared from Syria, he answered, "I don't know how this is going to end." This is not a signal that there is a clear objective and an exit strategy.

Our concern is that this would enable the Syrian president to consolidate power as someone who has murdered 133,000 of his own citizens. Could the minister explain just what might happen should the coalition be successful in removing ISIL from the Syrian area? Who would be in power?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to have a debate sometime and have the Liberals explain exactly where they are on this thing, but I appreciate that is for another time and another day.

The idea that just because we do not support the Assad regime—and we do not—ISIL should therefore have free rein or a free ride to move into Syria is completely unacceptable. We have seen, as ISIL has been degraded within Iraq, that they have been moving heavy equipment and personnel into Syria, and they cannot or should not be given a free ride just because we disagree with the government in Syria. We are not prepared to do that. That is exactly why we are doing this. It is so there is no safe haven for ISIL.

We know of the terrible consequences that ISIL has inflicted upon people in the region. It is completely unacceptable, and unlike the Liberal Party, our efforts have been completely consistent in that regard. The idea that we should sit on the sidelines and babble about this and be completely incomprehensible is unacceptable to this government and, I think, to the people of Canada.

**Mr. Robert Goguen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it was pretty apparent from the hon. member's speech that the basis of our actions is a war that has been declared against Canada and its values, and of course ISIL is the ominous enemy.



*Government Orders*

It is pretty apparent that the objective of this mission is to protect Canadian citizens. While the war may seem very far away, is it not true that, in essence, the whole issue of this war is to protect Canada's soil, Canada's citizens, and ultimately the public safety of law-abiding Canadian citizens?

I wonder if the minister could comment on that objective.

**Hon. Rob Nicholson:** Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to. I want to thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice for all of his help, support, and interest in this important mission.

We have been very clear that there is a direct threat to Canada. I have to say it. Maybe we will hear this in the speeches today. When I heard the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Liberal Party talk, I did not hear anything about the direct threat to Canada. ISIL has declared war on Canada. We have seen that. We have seen its rhetoric. We have seen its actions.

We have made it very clear that, yes, we are there to support Iraq. We are there to support Syria. We are supporting our coalition partners in that area, but in helping to degrade ISIL there, we are helping to protect ourselves against this menace.

ISIL has made it very clear that we are targets as well. That is another reason that we have always been so consistent that it is impossible for this country to stand on the sidelines against this threat.

• (1040)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Minister of Foreign Affairs just misspoke, and I will give him a chance to correct what he said. I just heard him say “We are there to support Syria.”

This is a deeply complex and mutually contradictory position that the administration and the Prime Minister are attempting to put forward. It is the idea that we can violate the sovereign integrity of another nation state, Syria, by conducting bombing missions in that state. We seem to think that international law only applies when we want to criticize Mr. Putin for violating the sovereign integrity of Ukraine. When we play games with international law, we are looking at finding ourselves with nowhere safe to stand.

As this mission is being proposed, we will put Canadian pilots into harm's way and violate the sovereign integrity of a country run by a brutal dictator, Bashar al-Assad, in the hope that he will not retaliate against that violation of his sovereignty because we will be taking aim at his enemies, ISIL. In the west, we used to think that ISIL members were rebels against Bashar al-Assad, so certainly they were better than Bashar al-Assad. We now seem to think that they might not be better than Bashar al-Assad.

Whose side are we on? Do we have any idea how this will play out in international law?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson:** Mr. Speaker, again, we have been very clear that we do not support the Assad regime. We have been very clear and consistent on that. However, the innocent people within Syria and our allies within Syria do need the support of the coalition, and that is exactly what we are providing.

The hon. member is worried about the legal risk. I believe that the legal risks are low, but the risk to security if we do nothing is very

high. That is something that the hon. member does not seem to get. The idea that ISIL could have free rein within Syria because we do not like the government of Assad or do not support the Syrian regime is no excuse.

Consistent with international law and consistent with what our allies have had to say, we will join the coalition, and we are asking for the support of Parliament.

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt or question from the opposition side that the crimes perpetrated by ISIS are appalling and abhorrent. There have been mass killings, sexual violence, slavery, forced displacement, and the destruction of holy and historic sites. In Iraq alone, the violence has led to the displacement of 2.5 million civilians and left 5.2 million in need of humanitarian assistance.

[*Translation*]

ISIL has committed heinous crimes, including mass killings, sexual violence, forced displacement and the destruction of holy sites. The violence ISIL perpetrates is entirely unjustifiable and entirely contrary to Islam. The crisis in Iraq and Syria is undermining peace and stability in the region.

[*English*]

The situation in Iraq and Syria demands an international response. The NDP has called for Canada to contribute to that international response since last June.

When I first asked the government to help Iraqis displaced by the ISIS invasion of Mosul, it was last June, and at the time the issue was obscure to the government. In fact, I raised the threat with the minister directly. His response was blunt. He pointed to previous U. S. failures in Iraq and said, “They broke it; they fix it.”

One month later, we called on the government to support Iraqi governance and security in response to the ISIS threat. We recognized then, as we do now, that only responsible, inclusive governance in Iraq will allow Iraqis to take control of their own country and their own destiny and build their own peace.

Canada must act. We must do so in a way that we can best add value to the international coalition and in a way that respects international law and our values as a country.

• (1045)

[*Translation*]

We believe that Canada must act immediately to save lives. We remain as clearly and resolutely opposed as ever to the Conservatives' ill-defined combat mission.

[*English*]

Unfortunately, the concerns I raised when I spoke on the original motion six months ago are still very valid. In fact, I want to read out now what I said then, six months ago. This is what I said:

The motion we are debating today is ill-defined and ill-conceived. It offers no plan and no exit strategy. Shockingly, there are no new humanitarian commitments....

Just as shockingly, there are no territorial limits on operations. Nearly every other member of the coalition has explicitly ruled out air strikes in Syria; the Prime Minister explicitly ruled them in.

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...the motion we are debating today would open that door to air strikes there—or anywhere, for that matter.

There are also no restrictions on who could be included in the category of “terrorists allied with ISIL”. ...

There are very few details in the motion on our deployment of “military assets”. Could these go beyond the nine planes and 600 troops currently committed? We just do not know.

Also, there is no requirement for Parliament to be consulted...if the mission is expanded or extended.

That was all true then. Unfortunately, it is also true now, except now it is worse. The new motion does not rule out the possibility of deploying ground combat troops in the future. In his speech earlier this week, the Prime Minister opened the door to a further expansion, saying: “...we must avoid if we can taking on ground combat responsibilities in this region. We seek to have the Iraqis do this themselves....”

In other words, the government will do its best, but there are no promises. With the government's record, that is far from reassuring.

There are other disturbing features of this new mission as well. Whereas the previous objective was to “degrade” ISIS, now the Minister of Defence apparently wants to “defeat” ISIS. This implies a much longer commitment. It also highlights the need for an exit strategy that the government does not seem to have.

Of course, the new motion extends Canadian air strikes into Syria without a UN or NATO mandate and without the permission of the Syrian government. This is dangerous in three ways. First, the action may well be illegal. Second, the government has done nothing to show otherwise or to show that it takes international law seriously at all.

After the Prime Minister belittled and joked about international law yesterday afternoon, the government was forced to move quickly to cover up the fact that it had not sent notice of its intention to the UN Security Council, as is required in cases of self-defence. The legal case that bombing in Syria constitutes any form of self-defence has not been made.

The legal case for this war is made even weaker by a change in the text of this motion compared with the one from October. The previous motion targeted ISIS and its allies. The motion in front of us targets ISIS and “aligned groups”, opening the door to a much larger role for Canada in the so-called war on terrorism.

Second, since Canadian pilots will be flying in Syria without ground support, the likelihood of mistakes that kill innocent people is far greater. In fact, the U.S. has excluded Syria from its own standards to prevent civilian casualties and has admitted that it does not have a clear idea of the results of its bombing in Syria. The government is apparently preparing a messaging campaign for if and when civilians are killed, but it has not said how it will prevent civilian deaths in the first place.

Even if pilots are able to identify targets, they will sometimes, inevitably, identify the wrong targets. As Lieutenant General James Terry, the top U.S. commander overseeing the anti-ISIS operation, said last year:

We have some great capability in terms of precision. What's in the balance here if you're not careful is you can be precisely wrong.... And you could create a very bad situation.

Of course, civilian deaths increase the ability of ISIS to use air strikes as a recruitment tool.

Third, bombing ISIS in Syria supports the brutal dictator Bashar al-Assad. The Assad regime has used barrel bombs and chemical weapons against children, women, and men in Syria. Assad is directly responsible for a civil war that has cost some 220,000 lives, over 100 times more than ISIS.

We have heard disturbing reports that the Assad regime is collaborating with ISIS, and Syrian opposition groups report that Assad's forces are exploiting the gaps created by bombing to take over more territory. By bombing in Syria, we reduce the prospects for a lasting political solution without Assad, which is needed to resolve the broader conflict.

● (1050)

[*Translation*]

It goes without saying that Canada must do something about ISIL. Our response must be serious and significant. The question is, what should Canada do? How can we be most helpful, not just in the short run but in defeating ISIL over the long term?

I want to make one thing very clear: we do not need to shoot missiles or drop bombs in order to prove that we take this threat seriously. Over 60 countries are helping to defeat ISIL, and the vast majority are not taking part in air strikes.

[*English*]

From the beginning, the NDP has been proactive and consistent not just in opposing the military mission but in proposing a practical and principled alternative. In the fall, New Democrats called on the government to do four concrete things: support the construction of refugee camps, help victims of sexual violence, assist in protecting ethnic and religious minorities, and encourage the international prosecution of war crimes. To the former minister's credit, he agreed to all of these. He even acted on some of them, but there is so much more that remains to be done.

I have been disappointed to hear the new minister repeat time and time again that Canada is doing its share. There are children freezing in Dohuk refugee camps in Kurdistan. A quarter of Lebanon's population is, in fact, Syrian refugees, pushing that already fragile country to the brink.

A majority of the UN humanitarian appeals for Iraq and Syria remain unfunded. When the need is so great, so obvious, so tragic, and so compelling, I do not find it acceptable for the minister to shrug and say that Canada has done its share. The truth is that most of those in need in Iraq are not in ISIS-controlled territory. They are refugees, internally displaced persons, and people whose livelihoods have been stolen from them by chaos and carnage. They are victims of ISIS, and Canada can help them now.

During last year's debate, I told the story of an encounter I had with a group of young Iraqi children in a refugee camp. I hope those children survived the winter. If they did, they almost certainly still need our help. Now as then, we need to be smart about how we deliver.

At the foreign affairs committee, we have just concluded a study that the NDP requested on Canada's response to ISIS. The committee has heard from a diverse group of witnesses, including academics, civil society representatives, and community organizations. The message from witnesses has been clear: Canada must respond to ISIS; a response must be smart, responsible and comprehensive; and we need a strategy based on international co-operation to both respond to ISIS on the ground and to prevent radicalization and extremism abroad.

We have clear guidance in these areas from existing UN Security Council resolutions on ISIS: 2170, 2178, and 2199. None of these authorizes a military mission. However, the Security Council is requiring action to prevent the flow of foreign fighters, financing, and resources to ISIS and other terrorist organizations. While air strikes are being used as a recruitment tool for ISIS, these UN measures tackle the networks and structures that ISIS and other extremist organizations use to recruit and spread their ideology and their influence.

The Government of Canada should take immediate and specific steps to meet its international obligations in these areas. As part of that effort, the government should immediately sign and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty, which it refuses to sign, to demonstrate commitment to ending the flow of weapons to illegal armed groups and human-rights abusers.

The government should also partner with domestic communities to develop a strategy to counter radicalization here in Canada. In fact, the one program that had existed the Conservatives cut. Canada can lead the way as the international coalition develops a strong campaign of counter-extremist messaging, exposing the brutality of ISIS and the lack of a religious basis for its atrocities.

Finally, Canada can do a great deal more to help build the inclusive, responsible governance in Iraq that all the experts agree is needed for a lasting solution after ISIS.

As one of the witnesses at committee, University of Waterloo professor Bessma Momani, stated, "If you don't provide sustainable institutions that can fill that vacuum, it will just be another acronym that will fill that space". I could not agree with her more.

That is where Canada's expertise and Canada's potential lie. We can save lives. We can build peace to help the people in Iraq.

● (1055)

[Translation]

We in the NDP strongly believe that Canada has unparalleled expertise to respond to this crisis, and we must put that expertise to good use.

[English]

This country is better than the legally dubious and strategically ignorant motion of the government. That is why I am very proud to

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present the following amendment on behalf of the official opposition.

I move that Government Business No. 17 be amended by the following:

(a) replacing the words "the threat that ISIL poses to Canada and to international peace and security, will grow" with the words "from capable and enabled local forces, the threat ISIL poses to international peace and security, including to Canadian communities, will continue to grow";

(b) replacing the word "2178" with the words "2170, 2178, and 2199";

(c) deleting sections (viii), (ix) and (x); and

(d) deleting all the words after the word "Accordingly," and substituting the following: "this House calls on the Government to:

a. end the participation of Canadian Forces troops in combat, air strikes and advise-and-assist training in Iraq and Syria as soon as possible;

b. boost humanitarian aid in areas where there would be immediate, life-saving impact, including assisting refugees with basic shelter and food needs; and investing in water, sanitation and hygiene, health and education for people displaced by the fighting;

c. work with our allies in the region to stabilize neighbouring countries, strengthen political institutions and assist these countries in coping with an influx of refugees;

d. contribute to the fight against ISIL, including military support for the transportation of weapons;

e. provide assistance to investigation and prosecution of war crimes;

f. increase assistance for the care and resettlement of refugees impacted by this conflict;

g. work to prevent the flow of foreign fighters, finances, and resources to ISIL, in accordance with our international obligations under United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2170, 2178, and 2199;

h. put forward a robust plan of support for communities and institutions working on de-radicalization and counter-radicalization;

i. report back on the costs of the mission and humanitarian assistance provided to date on a monthly basis to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, until Canadian involvement is concluded; and

j. continue to offer its resolute and wholehearted support to the brave men and women of the Canadian Forces who stand on guard for all of us".

● (1100)

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I find the NDP's position as expressed in that amendment to the motion completely incoherent. The amendment calls for war crimes investigations, but opposes military action to prevent the commission of the very said war crimes.

In the last two days we have been visited in Ottawa by leaders of the Canadian, Iraqi, Syrian, Chaldean, Yazidi, Kurdish, Shia, secular Sunni, Arab communities, all of whom have enthusiastically endorsed the motion before the House on the extension and expansion of the Canadian military operation against this genocidal terrorist organization. I emphasize the word genocidal.

There used to be a time when the NDP, representing the Canadian left, supported efforts to combat genocide. Whatever happened to that NDP? Whatever happened to the NDP's commitment to the international convention on the prevention of genocide? Whatever happened to its support for the concept of the responsibility to protect?

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If the responsibility to protect means anything, and I do not mean the kind that is encumbered by the vetoes of Russia and China at the United Nations Security Council, but the principle of it, does it not mean that in instances such as this, preventing genocide, preventing ethnic cleansing, preventing sexual slavery of women and preventing the execution of gay men by throwing them off towers?

The member talks about humanitarian relief. The point of our military operation is to prevent more IDPs, more refugees, more victims and more genocide. Does the member not understand that had we not begun this military operation several months ago, there would have been thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, of additional victims of ISIL's genocide? Does he not think we therefore have a moral responsibility to actually act and prevent the creation of yet more victims?

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Mr. Speaker, it is sad when we hear the minister and his conflated rhetoric. Here he goes again. He cannot get his head around the fact that out of the 60 countries in this coalition, we are all seized with dealing with this crisis.

With the Conservative government, it is all about its domestic politics. What have the Conservatives done? They have conflated the situation to the point where they are actually being reckless in their actions. Let me give a couple of examples of how reckless they are.

Just yesterday, the Prime Minister ridiculed the whole notion of Canada being a responsible actor vis-à-vis international law. Either the Conservatives had no idea of what our responsibility was with regard to section 51, or they decided they would just make it a joke. Either way, it is irresponsible and entirely reckless.

It was really interesting, because just after our leader asked the Prime Minister, in a very sanguine way, if we were going to abide by international law, if we were going to fulfill it at least the bare minimum, because it is still controversial in the way that section 51 could be used, the Prime Minister made fun of him as being somehow in line with the lawyers from ISIL.

Just an hour after that, the government flip-flopped and had to admit that it was going to be informing the UN. That shows the credibility of the government, the credibility of the minister and the credibility of this action being taken in the motion.

It is reckless, it is ill-informed and it shows the kind the rhetoric the Conservatives use, unfortunately, on a very serious issue.

• (1105)

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the proposed amendment by the member with a great deal of interest. There are certainly some amendments with which the Liberal Party would agree.

He mentioned that the NDP would oppose the military training mission in Iraq. Is the NDP opposed to all aspects of a military mission, even if it were well behind the front lines, which is where the advise and assist mission was intended to be and was promised to be by the Prime Minister in the first place? We know it then morphed into something more of a combat role, but it was originally planned for training and assisting Iraqi troops so they could protect their peoples and their communities. Is that something the NDP does not support?

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Mr. Speaker, I know it is difficult for the Liberal Party on this one. We have been very clear. We would take our soldiers out of theatre. The reason is by example of the government. It was never defined what they should do.

When the government first came forward and said that we would send forces on the ground, we said that we should have a debate and a vote as per the Prime Minister's promise, which he broke. The Liberal Party said that was not a problem, that it would keep an eye on it, but that the government had better not cross the line. The Conservatives crossed a couple of lines, including the front lines. Therefore, unlike the Liberal Party, we believe we should have a clear strategy with clear oversight. We did not have that.

The former minister of foreign affairs and I were asked to provide humanitarian support, all the things I enumerated, of which apparently the Minister of National Defence was not aware. I do not know if the two talked about this before. However, these were the things we were asked to do, including by the religious minority groups. That is why it is in our motion. All of this to say that what members see in the amendment in front of them could not be clearer.

The problem for the Liberal Party is that it does not know where it stands. It is important in this debate that it be absolutely clear. What would it do if it were to become government? Would it withdraw or not? We have said we would because we believe the smart and responsible thing to do is to do what we have been asked to do by the Iraqis, by the people on the ground.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I remember debating the government's position on the war in Syria a few years ago in the House. The government refused to pressure Russia and China into helping Syria, where civil war had just broken out. It even refused to help the neighbouring countries, such as Turkey and Lebanon, which are currently taking in millions and millions of Syrian refugees.

The government was unable to be proactive about that conflict and now it is telling us this is the only solution there is. It refused to act in the early days of the Syrian conflict and, four years later, it is telling us there is no other choice. It refused to be proactive about the conflict, refused to help the countries that were helping Syria, and refused to pressure its own allies into passing a UN Security Council resolution on Syria.

Now, here are the Conservatives, trying to teach us a lesson, but we have no lessons to learn from them. I would like my colleague to say a few words about.

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[English]

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Mr. Speaker, it is indicative of the government to come to the game late and then react instead of act. What I mean by that is when I went to the government back in June and said that we needed to be seized with this and I offered some contacts of people to get in touch with, it was not interested. It was not interested in reaching across the aisle.

I will give the former minister of foreign affairs credit because he did ask me and my colleague from the Liberal Party to go and do an assessment on the ground. The problem was our assessment and what we heard and what the government did were two different things. No one asked us to send in air strikes. The government could not even tell the truth about how we ended up in the air strikes. It made it sound as if it was asked to do it. We offered it, and of course the Americans said sure. Why would they not? This is how misdirected and reckless the policy of the government is.

I will finish with this. If we oppose the government in its direction, it is viewed as if we do not care. I would have thought we were passed that point. We saw that when we debated Afghanistan. Clearly, that is in the DNA of the government. It cannot reach across the aisle. It cannot have a debate without going for the jugular. It undermines this debate and also undermines the institution of Parliament. We should be able to bring our ideas forward and say what we think about it. It is insulting and demeaning for the government to then say that because our ideas differ from its that we somehow do not care. Canadians deserve a lot better.

• (1110)

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the government's motion to extend and expand Canada's mission in Iraq. Liberal Party members do not support this motion to seek Parliament's consent for an unfocused and potentially unending mission because it is not in the Canadian interest.

ISIL poses a real and serious threat to security around the world and in Canada. We recognize that. Liberals believe that Canada must be part of the international effort against ISIL. As one of 60 nations participating in the coalition against this ideological extremist and terrorist scourge, Canada must play a constructive role. We must make the best contribution we can, one that serves our national interest.

The mission proposed by the Prime Minister does not measure up. It has an unclear legal basis, unclear mission objectives and an open-ended scope. Overwhelmingly, it fails the national interest test.

Why else do Liberals oppose the Prime Minister's present motion? Let us discuss this.

Last fall, Liberals did support the government's plan to send special forces into Iraq to help behind the lines, training, advising and assisting Iraqi forces. We believe that ISIL will be stopped when local Iraqi forces can fight successfully against the ISIL rampage, can protect local people and their villages, can succeed in capturing and holding lost territory, and can commit to respecting minority rights. We want to help them to do those things.

However, the Liberals did not support the Prime Minister's October motion to go to war in Iraq, because he failed to offer a clear objective for his combat plan. He failed to outline a responsible plan

to achieve it. He failed to make the case that a bombing role was the best contribution Canadians could make. Regrettably, the motion before us has similar deficits.

Earlier this week, the Liberal Party leader's speech in the House reminded Parliament of four core principles Liberals set out for the October combat mission in Iraq, and they still stand today. The first principle is that Canada has a role to play in confronting humanitarian crises in the world. That is an important Canadian value. Over many decades, Canadian governments have generously contributed help, military and non-military alike, in human emergencies abroad.

We opened our country's doors to the oppressed. We welcomed refugees to come, to rebuild their lives here, and those refugees have helped build Canada. Refugees from Vietnam, Uganda, Cambodia, Somalia, Nicaragua, from every corner of the world, have come to Canada and made our country better. This current motion contains no new ideas, no new funds, no new proposals to help alleviate the catastrophic humanitarian crisis in the region.

• (1115)

[Translation]

Under the second principle, when our government considers deploying our men and women in uniform, there must be a clear mission and a clear role for Canada. The October motion did not respect that principle and the motion that was moved today is just as vague about Canada's mission and role. In October, the Liberals expressed grave concern that lack of clear objectives masked the Prime Minister's real intentions, namely involving Canada in a longer, deeper combat engagement.

The motion moved today validates that concern. The Prime Minister is saying that the objective is to weaken the Islamic State, whereas the Minister of National Defence is saying that it is to defeat and completely eliminate the group. Those are two very different mandates.

Once again, the new motion on the combat mission does not set out any clear objectives or any plan as to when or how Canada will extricate itself from the multi-party conflict affecting this complex region, which is mired in deep-rooted divisions, tension and hate.

[English]

On the contrary, section (a) of the motion gives the government exceedingly vague and broad latitude to conduct this war. It reads that this House:

(a) continues to support the Government's decision to contribute Canadian military assets to the fight against ISIL, and terrorists aligned with ISIL, including air strike capability with authorisation to conduct air strikes in Iraq and Syria;

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That is a pretty open-ended permission slip, and both the Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Foreign Affairs appear eager to use to it. They explicitly compared this new mission to Afghanistan, stating that “we’re in this for the longer term”. In Afghanistan, the longer term meant a decade; the longest war in Canadian history.

When asked who takes over should ISIL be cleared from Syria, the Minister of National Defence told Evan Solomon on *Power & Politics* that he does not know how this is going to end.

No clear objective is not good enough. Without objectives, clarity, or boundaries in the motion, Canada’s war on ISIL in Syria could well result in Syrian President Bashar al-Assad consolidating his grip on power. This president oppressed and terrorized his own people. In just four years, he bombed, gassed, and killed more than 130,000 of his own citizens, the vast majority of them civilians, and almost a quarter of the victims were women and children. Enabling Mr. al-Assad is not in Canadians’ interest.

The third Liberal principle is that the case for deploying our forces must be made openly and transparently, based on clear, reliable, and dispassionately presented facts.

The current Conservative government has not been transparent and open on this mission, not with parliamentarians nor with the Canadian people. The Conservatives refused to provide cost estimates to Canadians until shamed into it by the Parliamentary Budget Officer. They refused to provide critics with briefings until yesterday, while troops were first deployed last September.

It is facts not fantasy that underpin the moral value of honesty. Honesty in turn earns trust. We cannot trust the current government, which has been dishonest to Canadians. At every opportunity, ministers promote the myth of stable increasing funding for defence, the myth of investment in state-of-the-art equipment. The fact is that the Conservatives have been cutting the budget for the last four years, they reduced the defence share of funding to 1% of GDP, the lowest in 70 years, and they failed to replace our rusting military planes, ships, trucks, tanks, and rifles.

The Minister of National Defence himself was caught in a string of falsehoods, misrepresenting a photo of a religious ceremony to promote his war rhetoric, making false claims about the NDP’s past record on combat mission votes, and concocting false statistics on former Liberal government defence spending—statistics that are on public record.

Much more serious is the fact that our military was sent into ground combat operations in Iraq despite the Prime Minister’s repeated, explicit assurances that this would not happen. Canadians were assured by government and by the generals that the special forces would not accompany troops to the front lines, they would not do what is called “close combat advising”, and they would not engage in combat. However, in fact, they did and they are.

In January we learned that, since last November, the mission had “evolved”. Canadian troops are active on the front lines. They regularly engage in direct combat activities. Unlike our closest allies whose advisors stay behind the wire, we are needlessly risking our soldiers’ lives. Tragically, Sargent Andrew Joseph Doiron lost his life in this combat zone.

Now the government gives false reasons for participating in the Syria bombing mission. The Conservatives claim Canada has been asked because only Canada has precision-guided smart bombs to assist the United States. That is false. Even Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have these munitions and use them very effectively in the region, according to the chair of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dempsey.

Voting yes now to a longer, deeper war for Canada, led by a dishonest government we cannot trust, is simply not in Canadians’ interest.

Our final principle is that Canada’s role must reflect the broad scope of Canadian capabilities, so we help how best we can.

• (1120)

Given the Conservatives’ massive defence cuts, the Liberals are concerned about asking our Canadian Armed Forces to do more. The Conference of Defence Associations Institute reported that the forces’ current international deployments “mask a considerable decline in their capabilities and readiness”. Today’s soldiers injured in the Afghanistan war are still waiting to receive timely professional mental health care. How unacceptable.

What are Canada’s capabilities? How can Canada play a constructive role in this very challenged region? What roles reflect Canadian values and our national interest? What do Liberals support?

Canada can do better. Canada can act on the values it was known for throughout the world. These are values like working constructively with others, helping the less fortunate, doing more than our fair share, and being honest.

I will talk about three areas that the Liberals support. First, Canada can work constructively with coalition allies to accelerate the training and capabilities of more Iraqi soldiers. According to Major-General Michael Hood, 69 special forces members currently work with Americans to provide strategic and tactical advice to security forces in the Iraqi army. To date, they have conducted 42 training courses with 650 peshmerga soldiers.

Canada has a clear expertise in helping to train Iraqi forces to fight and stop ISIL. Surely there is a need for more trainers. Canada supplied more than 1,000 fine trainers in its final years in Afghanistan. Surely Canada can do more now in Iraq. We can, and must, do it away from the front lines.

This is an area in which we differ from our NDP colleagues, who have been all over the map about military missions, sometimes talking about potentially being supportive of strategic airlifts or military use to bring supplies. Today, we heard that the NDP is not interested in any military involvement at all, while we, the Liberals, have respect for our Canadian Armed Forces members. We know that they can play an essential role here.

[*Translation*]

Second, Canada could lead a well-funded and well-planned international humanitarian aid intervention to help people in need in the Levant region. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres, has said that there are now 3.8 million Syrian refugees registered and 12 million displaced persons who need help within Syria itself. That is not including the millions of other displaced persons and refugees from Iraq.

Last month, the High Commissioner launched an appeal to gather \$3.7 billion in humanitarian aid for 2015 alone. He said that the need for humanitarian aid in Syria is growing much more rapidly than the contributions from the international community. He encouraged donor countries to give a lot more aid to support refugees and host communities. This refugee crisis is threatening the stability and security of the region. Neighbouring countries, such as Lebanon and Jordan, have been destabilized. Turkey is feeding and housing millions of refugees.

• (1125)

[*English*]

What is in Canada's best interest? We must do more to help vulnerable refugee families, because it is a Canadian value and so that these families' soldiers can confidently fight ISIL.

Third, Canada should expand our country's target for Syrian refugee settlement. Let us give more victims of war an opportunity to start a new life in Canada. The Conservative government's promises have been weak, and its delivery has been even weaker.

Here is an example of past Canadian governments' generosity. In just 1979 and 1980, 50,000 Vietnamese refugees settled in Canada.

These immigrants, known as boat people, were both urban and rural dwellers. They did not speak English or French, by and large, they had no Canadian relatives, and they arrived during an economic downturn in Canada. This made integrating into Canada and achieving economic independence a difficult struggle. Today, these Vietnamese Canadians are recognized for their successes, their strong communities, and their tremendous contributions to Canada. We should keep the figure of 50,000 over two years in mind.

In contrast, the Conservative government has been miserly in its treatment of Syrian refugees. Originally targeting only 1,300 refugees over 18 months, the government resettled less than half by its target date of last December. At opposition members' urging, the government recently increased its pledge to 10,000 refugees in three years, but refugee aid groups are skeptical of this pledge because much of the funding must be raised by sponsoring families and private organizations, not provided by government. It is not a Canadian value to do less than our fair share. Canadians believe in helping more, and that is in the Canadian interest.

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Finally, of the four commitments in the government motion, Liberals enthusiastically endorse only the last, which I will quote:

Accordingly, this House:...

(d) offers its resolute and wholehearted support to the brave men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces who stand on guard for all of us.

[*Translation*]

The Liberal Party respects and recognizes the professionalism, courage and dedication of all those who serve our country. We have never hesitated to deploy our extremely competent Canadian Armed Forces to combat zones when doing so was very clearly in the best interest of Canada and Canadians. In each of those cases, the best interest of the nation was very clear.

[*English*]

A mission designed to uphold Canada's interest must have transparent objectives, a responsible plan to achieve them, and a plan to exit the theatre of war. That is missing from this motion and from this proposed combat mission.

Liberals encourage the government, as quickly and as responsibly as possible, to shift Canada's role in Iraq, shift it not into a bombing role in Syria but back to a non-combat mission, focused on expanded Iraqi troop training, humanitarian aid leadership, and a far more generous and warm-hearted welcome to this war's refugees. That is the Canadian way.

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that speech perfectly summarized the risible and illiberal position of today's Liberal Party under the leadership of the member for Papineau, departing from the long tradition of the Liberal Party of responsible internationalism and action in the face of genocide and of ethnic cleansing.

I was disappointed, but not surprised, that the member did not even mention the largest refugee resettlement program that Canada has had since 1980, which has been the resettlement of more than 20,000 Iraqi refugees. I launched that program in 2009, and not a single Liberal MP ever asked the government to, and they have never even commented on it.

Yesterday, I met with several of those who came here as Iraqi refugees—Assyrians, Chaldeans, Yazidis, Kurds, Sunni Arabs, and Shia Iraqi Canadian refugees, among the more than 20,000 that this government has welcomed in the past five years—and every single one of them enthusiastically endorsed the expanded Canadian military mission proposed in this motion and every single one of them expressed profound disappointment with the Liberal Party for abandoning its pretension to support the responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide.

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I have a very simple question for the member. Why does she ignore the more than 20,000 Iraqi refugees we have already brought to Canada, more than any other country in the world, by the way, and why does she want us to allow more refugees to be created by inaction? Does she not understand that genocide does not stop through good wishes, it does not stop through diplomatic resolutions, and it can only be stopped in this instance through kinetic action? Why is the Liberal Party abandoning its own tradition in that respect?

• (1130)

**Ms. Joyce Murray:** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to hear the minister sliding down the slippery slope of exaggeration and rhetoric and going right into the zone of myth and falsehood. In fact, the responsibility to protective doctrine is very clear. It requires the UN Security Council's approval and it requires the invitation of the state that the country wishes to enter.

The minister would do well to look at his own record of saying things that are simply not true, and look at his own government's record of rhetoric, whether it is on a bill where the minister said, "You're with us or you're with the child pornographers", and now we hear that we are either bombing people in Iraq or we are sitting on the sidelines.

This kind of simplistic, untrue rhetoric is undermining the discourse about how we can actually help with this important coalition in Iraq to address the threat by ISIL. If the Conservatives actually wanted to have a collaborative approach across the House, they would not be using this kind of rhetoric, which tells us this whole thing is a purely political initiative on the part of the government and it is unworthy of the Government of Canada.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I was absolutely flabbergasted to hear out of the mouth of the Liberal defence critic a description of the NDP position as being all over the map.

The Liberal leader, a month ago, initially spoke for intervention but then ultimately voted against the mission in Iraq. On Bill C-51, he is against the bill but he is going to be voting for it. Last week, he publicly spoke in favour of an extension of the mission in Iraq; now the Liberals are voting against it. Yesterday, when asked, if they formed government, would the Liberals who are against the mission bring the troops home, the Liberals said no. The only party in this House that is all over the map, not only on this issue of ISIS and Iraq but on pretty much every issue in this House, is the Liberal Party of Canada.

I would like my hon. colleague to set the record straight and tell us this. Are the Liberals in favour of intervention in Iraq or not? Are they in favour of Bill C-51 or not? If so, why are their actions not consistent with their words?

**Ms. Joyce Murray:** Mr. Speaker, in fact the Liberal Party has been consistent from day one that we support the trainers; we support the Special Forces behind the wire, assisting the Iraqi troops to defend their peoples and their territory. We maintain that position. We said at the time we are not for a combat role, and we remain against a combat role.

What I am concerned about is that the New Democrats have been talking about military versus non-military as opposed to the real crux

of the issue being combat versus non-combat. They are not supporting a military mission, which means they do not believe that the men and women in uniform have any role to play that could be constructive in addressing this threat in Iraq and in Syria. The New Democrats do not believe in the professionalism of our men and women in uniform; they do not see their going there to be constructive to supply goods and to train. I think it is shameful that they have such little faith in the men and women in uniform.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

• (1135)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order please. Can I draw to the House's attention to the fact that this is questions and comments and debate, not question period, and that the conduct from both sides of the House needs to have a greater degree of decorum than we have seen in the last little while.

The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the member's speech and I am glad that she brought up the apparent inability of the government to plan properly for this mission. In fact, it is consistent with its inability to plan a budget of its revenues and expenditures for the next year.

I am also pleased that the member raised the issue of Vietnamese refugees and how generous Canada was at the time and how many refugees we welcomed. I believe also that we were very generous and acted very decisively in accepting Iranian refugees after the revolution.

The point of the matter is that to accept refugees we need resources. Citizenship and Immigration needs resources to process refugees. I would like the member to comment on the resource issue, as well as on the resources available to the Canadian military.

**Ms. Joyce Murray:** Mr. Speaker, as we all know, the government has chosen to bring forward tax breaks to the wealthiest families on the backs of the Canadian Armed Forces who are contributing a full one-quarter of the budget cuts that are being used to provide those tax breaks. That is at the cost of the men and women in uniform and the equipment they need to be safe and do their jobs.

The government has a shameful record of undermining refugees in our country, cutting health care benefits, making it less likely they will receive social support from the provinces when they need it. This is a government that touts its 10,000 refugee target from Syria, yet 60% of that target would have to be funded by families and individual groups not by government.

The government has been clear. It is the government that started the discourse when the *Sun Sea* Tamils came from the Pacific Ocean. It started saying these are queue jumpers and cheaters as opposed to human beings running away from a country that has been at civil war and where their lives are at risk. It is a shameful record on refugees. The government has not one thing to teach the Liberals on that.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is any more serious conversation that the House could engage in than the one we are engaging in right now.



*Government Orders*

I listened to my colleague's speech and many times she referred to humanitarian aid. All of us in the House know that if we are going to deliver humanitarian aid we need security. We need security on the ground to allow the NGOs to actually deliver that aid to the people who need it.

Most troubling about the comments I heard in regard to humanitarian need is the fact that the member chooses to ignore the many large investments in humanitarian aid that our government has made since the last debate in the House. On January 7, we announced an additional \$40 million to Iraq. We announced another \$25 million for neighbouring countries to help them with the refugee settlement issue. We announced another \$25 million for direct aid, directly inside Syria. As it relates to refugee settlement, we announced that we would accept 3,000 more Iraqi refugees and 10,000 more Syrian refugees.

My question is simply this. Would the member at least acknowledge to Canadians that the government has a stellar record when it comes to providing humanitarian aid but we need to do that with security on the ground?

• (1140)

**Ms. Joyce Murray:** Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of words in the Conservative members' mouths about humanitarian issues, but not a single dollar, not a single promise and not a single project in this mission.

Furthermore, when the member calls on us to have a serious conversation in the House, I hope he will have that conversation with his leader, the Prime Minister, who when asked about the legal basis for this bombing raid in Syria, dismissed it by making a joke about whether he would be attacked by ISIL lawyers. He undermined the seriousness of our responsibility to the international community and to Canadians as the government proposes to take our country to war in Syria.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to be allowed to speak today on the motion before us to extend the mission in Iraq, to expand it into Syria and to conduct it over the next 12 months.

I want to start by saying I appreciate your words, Mr. Speaker. The disrespect and the heckling on both sides of this House and the allowing of this discussion to fall into the disrespectful patterns that we see in question period would certainly be unfortunate.

We are talking about sending Canadian Forces, for another 12 months, into an even more dangerous mission. We should be able to discuss it like grownups, on both sides of this House, in a respectful debate, a serious debate, which would allow Canadians to help form their own opinions about what Canada should do.

I do not think anyone in this place believes that Canada should do nothing. I do not think anyone in this place underestimates the threat that is ISIL or ISIS. Both names are used, but the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant is a more dangerous force in many ways than what we have seen before. They claim to have the ability to set up their own perimeters, their own sovereignty and their own caliphate.

They have shown themselves to be excessively brutal, sadistic and to shock the conscience of the world. They are practising a 9th century extremist interpretation of Islam, and they represent a quite

dangerous force. I do not think anyone around this House of Commons would deny that.

The question then becomes what best can Canada do to degrade ISIL, which is the wording of this motion, to deal with the fact that there are numerous criminal thug organizations around the world now. Back in 2001, I do not think anybody in North America would have imagined that there was a worse group than al Qaeda. We have al Qaeda still exerting its influence, and al Qaeda behind the attacks in Paris. We have Boko Haram kidnapping innocent schoolgirls in Nigeria. We have the presence of groups that are as yet unnamed that could emerge.

Our discussion should be one of how we, as a western community of nations, best deal with the general threat of terrorist organizations around the world. One of the ways to do this, of course, is to ensure that the west not appear to be at war against Islam. This particular narrative of west versus Islam is a rallying cry in the propaganda that has people gather.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate it if members opposite would not heckle. I am trying to speak respectfully. I have never heckled them.

We must not allow ourselves to enforce the propaganda and rhetoric of those people we would like to defeat. With that said, let us move to what is being proposed in this mission.

I did want to stop and say that I commend the administration, the Conservative government for the humanitarian efforts we have taken so far. I would have said that on Tuesday morning had I been allowed to speak. I was pleased to hear from the Prime Minister that we are feeding Iraqi children, that we are taking steps to assist people who are in situations of unbearable suffering, but there is much more that needs to be done on the humanitarian side and I will return to that later.

This mission as described is to extend, for a 12-month period, the continued bombing in Iraq where we have been invited by the Iraqi government, but also to extend bombing into Syria. I would like to spend a lot of my time this morning, and I do not have much time, on the question of what this mission will do in Syria and how absolutely fraught with peril that is.

When I spoke to this idea of bombing in Iraq last October, I worked on the general theme that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Canada tends to be a country of great intentions. Certainly, I do not take away any of the intentions of the Conservative government on this issue.

However, we had good intentions when we went into Libya. We had good intentions when we said that we were there under the doctrine of responsibility to protect, to protect the civilian population of Libya against a brutal dictator, Moammar Gadhafi. We then switched our purpose and said that we were not actually there for the responsibility to protect, that we would not accept a ceasefire proposal and would not move to peace talks as long as Moammar Gadhafi was in charge.

*Government Orders*

I remember John Baird said, and I can use his name since he has left this place, that while we may not know who will replace Gadhafi, we could be sure of one thing, that it could not be worse than Gadhafi.

• (1145)

In so doing, we missed our chance. That is why I was the only member of Parliament to vote against the continued bombardment of Libya. I voted against it because I knew that the rebel forces that we were embracing as a legitimate government of Libya included al Qaeda forces. It seemed all too inevitable to me that the warehouses full of weapons that were held by Moammar Gadhafi in Libya would fall into the hands of extremists and terrorists. In fact, those weapons have now been traced to the hands of ISIS.

We went into Libya, and I do not think there is any question we made things very much worse. Equally, there is no question that our intentions were good.

Let us look at Syria. We have ignored the suffering in Syria far too long. We have allowed a brutal butcher, Bashar al-Assad, to murder his own people. We have been allowing this for four years. Since the Arab Spring in 2011, we have turned a blind eye to the cries for help from the rebel forces of Syria and those who want to get rid of Bashar al-Assad. There are now four million Syrian refugees, and over 220,000 people have been killed in Syria by Bashar al-Assad. That is the most recent estimate.

Why did we not go into Syria? We had the permission of the UN Security Council to go into Libya under the provision of responsibility to protect, and when we shifted our mission from responsibility to protect to regime change, we forever lost the ability to get the support of Russia and China to use responsibility to protect to go into Syria to protect civilians there.

I would not blame neighbouring countries suffering under the burden of trying to take care of four million refugees. The populations of Lebanon, of Jordan, and of Turkey are straining under the weight of trying to take care of the refugees who have tried to escape Bashar al-Assad. Now we show an interest in going into Syria. Why? We say it is because ISIS is in there.

Of course ISIS is there.

A few years back we saw U.S. Republicans posing with ISIS fighters because as rebel forces against Bashar al-Assad, they were the good guys. Now that we believe ISIS forces represent a threat around the world, we are interested in Syria. Now we are going to go in without any legal sanction, without any international law on our side. We are going to have to hope that Bashar al-Assad regards our efforts as somehow friendly to him, or we could have Syrians shooting down Canadian planes.

We now know from the Minister of National Defence, and I accept his word, that ISIS fighters do not have anti-aircraft missiles. Do Syrian government forces have anti-aircraft missiles? They just shot down a U.S. drone.

We know we do not want to ask Bashar al-Assad for his permission, because that would make it completely transparent that the net effect of our first efforts to engage ourselves in the crisis that is the civil war in Syria will be inevitably to assist Bashar al-Assad.

We do not want to admit that if we are successful in Syria, we will have made Bashar al-Assad secure by removing a dreadful force that also happens to be against him.

As I describe this, I hope that anyone can see, whether watching from home or in this chamber, that what faces us in Syria is, at a minimum, messy. It is conflicted. The opportunities for things to go wrong are almost infinite. We will be sending Canadian fighter planes to a remote distance without the support of the government of the region, as we have currently in Iraq, and we will be doing so in a war zone that is fraught with sectarian violence.

We know that Bashar al-Assad is supported by Hezbollah and by Iran. We know that the rebel forces include some who are legitimately seeking a democratic transition, but we have stood on the sidelines of butchery in Syria. Now, clothed in moral rectitude, we think we can go in and bomb Syria and nothing will go wrong.

I will go to the words of the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for the best way to defeat terrorism in the region. The best way and the biggest threat, as he put it, to terrorism is not from missiles; it is from a strategy of political inclusion. We should be doing much more to get the countries in that region, themselves threatened by ISIS, to take on the ISIS threat.

• (1150)

I congratulate the existing humanitarian efforts, but much more needs to be done for the four million Syrian refugees. Much more needs to be done to stem the flow of weapons to ISIS. Much more needs to be done to stem the flow of money to these terrorist groups, and we should, as a community of nations taking the threat of terrorism seriously, work to end the threat of Boko Haram, al Qaeda, ISIS, and groups of criminal thug organizations as yet unnamed.

This mission does not do that.

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the contribution of the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands to this important debate and I appreciate her heartfelt and informed views.

However, first, would she not agree that Canada's humanitarian contribution has been extraordinary? We have contributed over \$700 million to Syrian refugee relief and \$57 million to humanitarian support for Iraqi internally displaced persons, making us the sixth- and fifth-largest contributor in the world to those two humanitarian operations and the largest per capita contributor of all the developed countries. Would she not reflect on that being a robust Canadian commitment?

Second, she talked about the responsibility to protect as it applied to Libya. Would she not share my concern that the responsibility to protect policy, as incarnated at the United Nations, is problematic insofar as it grants vetoes to people like Vladimir Putin and the Chinese Politburo?

*Government Orders*

Would she not agree with me that the spirit of the principle of responsibility to protect applies, as does the UN convention on the prevention of genocide, in preventing ISIS from a carrying out a campaign of explicit, violent genocide and ethnic cleansing of religious minorities? As well, does she really think that Canada—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I do not think that I suggested we should stand on the sidelines. I just think that whatever we do should not make matters worse.

I will start with the first part of his question. Yes, I acknowledge that Canada has been one of the major contributors to humanitarian relief, but it is a drop in the bucket when we see the four million refugees in Jordan, in Lebanon, in Turkey.

I also want to acknowledge that when the minister was Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, I came to him with personal cases. I have many constituents trying to get relatives out of Syria, and he assisted in reuniting some families. However, now the same families are coming to me with stories of getting across the border with children loaded in the back seat of the car, making it all the way to Beirut, but not being able to get to the Canadian Embassy and being sent back into Syria.

There is an ongoing humanitarian crisis, and our efforts so far have not been even remotely sufficient. The budget of the UN commission on refugees to deal with this crisis is coming up short. It is one of the biggest humanitarian and refugee crises the world has ever seen.

To the second part of his question, responsibility to protect, as I mentioned in my speech, is complicated by needing the support of the UN Security Council. I hoped I made it clear that one of the ways we made matters worse was by contaminating and potentially fatally hobbling responsibility to protect forever by using it as an excuse to get into Libya and then shifting to regime change.

The reality is that we have ignored the crisis in Syria, but now we are interested in protecting people from ISIS. Who will protect them from Bashar al-Assad?

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member specifically if she is supportive of the amendments that the New Democrats have put forward. We have put forward 10 measures that we think are really important.

I note the member speaks of the great importance of Canada contributing. We do have a 62-member international coalition, many of whom are also simply focused on providing humanitarian and non-combat contributions.

I am wondering if the member agrees with and will support the amendments that we have put forward. I think I am hearing her say that she supports us and that there is a lot more we can do within those ten recommendations, including intensifying the aid to the refugees who are pouring out of Syria and Iraq.

• (1155)

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I do support those measures that were put forward by the official opposition as an amendment,

and I look also to UN Security Council resolution 2178, which specifically dealt with this issue and pointed out there are many things that countries around the world in that coalition can do to ensure that we provide humanitarian aid.

UN Security Council resolution 2178 also calls on nations to control radicalization within their own borders. In the context of the debate we are having on Bill C-51, I regret that when the government put forward anti-terrorism legislation, it ignored the measures that the U.K. has put in place. The U.K. is putting forward resolutions and programs for prisons and schools to abort efforts at radicalization in those institutions.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois would support an intervention if it put the humanitarian mission first and if it addressed the issues at the root of this crisis as well as the barbaric acts perpetrated by the self-proclaimed Islamic State.

However, the motion that the Conservatives are trying to adopt requires the blind trust of the House. The motion primarily calls for a military solution and is vague about the mission's objective and its assessment. The Bloc Québécois stands by its usual position and will not give this government a blank cheque.

This motion is even less clearly defined than the one moved six months ago in the House. Instead of restricting and better defining the type of intervention, the motion opens the door to a deeper and longer engagement. However, we can learn from experience, from our past successes and mistakes. For example, we can take lessons from the intervention in Kosovo, Canada's refusal to participate in the Iraq war, the deployment of troops in Afghanistan and the Libya intervention. We also have to take into consideration the complexity of the domestic and foreign policies of the countries in the Middle East. We have to consider the territories, countries, relations among the peoples living in the region and the religions practised there.

The motion proposes that we pursue our intervention in Iraq, true, but it also proposes that we intervene against the Islamic State and against terrorists aligned with the Islamic State, including the capacity to conduct air strikes in Syria. I will come back to Syria in a bit. However, we take the word “including” to mean that this motion would allow Canada to intervene against the Islamic State anywhere, regardless of borders, countries or political situations. The government is prepared to intervene everywhere. Who decides? No one knows.

However, the United Nations was created to provide a framework for international intervention. UN action is guided by its charter, which sets out the objectives of the United Nations. The objectives include “1. To maintain international peace and security”, which obviously includes sending troops, if necessary; “2. To develop friendly relations among nations”, which goes without saying; and “3. To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character”, which means solving problems by whatever means necessary, under the auspices of the United Nations.

*Government Orders*

Its action is based on some fundamental principles, including the “sovereign equality of all its Members”, which “settle their international disputes by peaceful means”, if possible, which “refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force” and which give the United Nations “every assistance”. There is not a single provision in the Charter of the United Nations that authorizes the UN to intervene in affairs that essentially fall under national jurisdiction.

The Bloc Québécois believes in these principles, which form the basis of our analysis of any action taken by the international community in cases of conflict. Any action taken by Quebec and Canada as part of our commitment to international solidarity should be focused on humanitarian action. The Bloc opposes all unilateral action and opposes the notion of a pre-emptive war in the absence of an imminent, established threat.

The motion moved by the Conservative government demonstrates a one-dimensional approach that calls for air strikes and in which urgent humanitarian assistance plays a secondary role. The Bloc Québécois agrees with the UN Secretary-General in that we need to address the underlying causes of this crisis. Following the adoption of resolution 2178, the UN Secretary-General said that “terrorism must be defeated”, and that “this objective could only be achieved by mobilizing international solidarity and tackling the underlying conditions that provide fertile soil for extremism.” The Secretary-General stressed that “the most powerful weapons against this extremism are education, jobs and leaders who listen to their people and follow the rule of law”.

● (1200)

Although the motion is open to the protection of civilians, particularly by providing emergency humanitarian assistance, the Minister of Defence is rushing to close the door on such assistance, saying that Canada has given enough.

When the government says that it is prepared to take military action and that Canada has given enough in the same sentence, despite the millions of Syrian refugees, we are far from the multilateral approach proposed by the UN and the Bloc Québécois.

When the government is prepared to intervene in a country that did not ask for it, to interfere in a civil war where our intervention will inevitably favour one of the belligerents, who should already be facing war crime charges, there is cause for concern.

Using the right to self-defence granted by the UN to justify future bombings against the Islamic State in Syria is a misguided interpretation.

The Bloc Québécois has not changed its mind and will not hand out a blank cheque. The proposed motion would enable Canada to intervene everywhere. We say no to that.

The UN was founded to provide an intervention framework in international relations. That is what we are defending and that is why we will vote against this motion. Our position is clear: yes to an intervention under the UN banner, and only under the UN banner.

**Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleague touched on this a bit in his speech, but the government has been rather restrained in its approach since the

beginning of the civil war in Syria. It did not provide the necessary help to places like Turkey and Lebanon, neighbouring countries that took in millions of refugees. The government's approach paled in comparison to its allies in terms of pressuring Russia and China and trying to get a resolution passed at the Security Council.

The government has truly abandoned Syria since the start of the current conflict there. That is partly why we are in this quagmire. Then the government comes to Parliament to tell us that there is no other solution, no other choice but to bomb Syria.

Could the government not have been proactive before coming to Parliament to tell us that bombing is the only solution? I would like my colleague to talk about the government's approach.

**Mr. Louis Plamondon:** Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member when she says that Canada was late in intervening or asking the United Nations to intervene, when there was the debate on what was called “the revolution” there. This allowed the Islamic State to infiltrate that country.

Now we are faced with the problem of a rebel group and the fact that the Islamic State wants to overthrow the government. The rebels proposed democracy, while the Islamic State is proposing another form of dictatorship, perhaps one that is even worse than the current dictatorship.

To be honest, in the post-analysis of any conflict, we can always find a reason to say we should have done something sooner. Indeed, in the current conflict in Syria, Canada has been remarkably silent when it could have taken action to pressure the UN into intervening first through resolutions and then through a possible peace accord.

● (1205)

**Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my colleague a question about the involvement of the men and women who will be sent to Syria and Iraq. CFB Bagotville is located in my riding. I expect that some of those individuals will be asked to serve their country during the course of the year-long mission.

The government lied to Canadians, to parliamentarians and to the armed forces when it said that there would be no military intervention and that it would not send our soldiers to the front line.

What does my Bloc colleague think of a government that is dishonest with its own armed forces personnel, who will obey the government's orders and go serve in those countries?

**Mr. Louis Plamondon:** Mr. Speaker, in any mission, of course our military personnel should be informed and aware of all action they will be asked to take.

Initially, the intention the government articulated in this House was to carry out a mission to strengthen, train and advise Iraqi troops. Then it added air strikes on very specific targets, including ISIL munitions dumps and troop movements that could be blocked with air strikes.

*Government Orders*

However, the government went beyond the original intention of the mission when it sent in ground troops. It goes without saying that that was not part of the request put to the House. The mission will go ahead, since the Conservatives have a majority, but our military personnel definitely need to be told exactly what role they will be asked to play.

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to join in this debate on extending our vital, military and humanitarian mission in order to help the innocent in Iraq and Syria, who are victims of this terrorist and genocidal organization, the so-called Islamic State, also known as Daesh or ISIL.

[*English*]

Let me be clear. Canada has always had a sense of moral obligation to act in concert with our allies when faced with grave threats to our security and to global security. We also believe in a moral obligation, wherever possible and prudent, to defend the innocent from the deprivations of genocide and ethnic cleansing, as is the case today in Iraq and eastern Syria.

Let us understand, first of all, the nature of the enemy, I would say the common enemy of humankind, in the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, ISIS, or Daesh. It is hard for some, perhaps with the enlightened western paradigm, to grasp the nature of this organization, because it is profoundly irrational in its entire ideology, in its motivations, and in its actions. This is an organization that is motivated by a dystopian vision of imposing, through violence, a caliphate: the idea of a theocracy grounded in a particularly violent iteration of seventh century Sharia law.

This organization and its fellow travellers regard anyone who does not share their dystopian vision of a caliphate as a *kafir*, as an infidel, as an enemy, as someone who is marked for, at best, slavery, dhimmitude, or at worst, death, and often a particularly gruesome one.

This is an organization that, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and various independent human rights observers, is responsible for some unthinkable depravities. They are responsible for beheading children; for mass sexual slavery of girls as young as eight; and for targeting gay men by, in one instance that is recorded on film by them, throwing a gay man off of a tower, and when he did not die, stoning him to death.

This is an organization that has sought to erase from the face of the earth the small and vulnerable minority community of the Yazidis, an ancient religious and ethnic community. ISIL has sought to obliterate the ancient Assyrian Chaldean peoples of the Nineveh plains, who are the indigenous people of that region of Mesopotamia, whose ancestors have been there for thousands of years, and who, for the better part of 1,700 years, have observed the Christian faith but for even longer have spoken their own ancient tongue, Chaldean and Aramaic.

ISIL is an organization that has quite literally no regard for the sanctity of human life, that regards girls and women as property rather than people, that regards minorities not as people worthy of protection and respect but rather of obliteration and elimination.

Let me share with members one specific example of its barbarity that was related to me by Archbishop Louis Sako, the leader of the Chaldean Iraqi church. He told me that after ISIL invaded Mosul, the second-largest city of Iraq, and issued a fatwa of death or conversion or dhimmitude for the Christians of Mosul, they fled with their possessions, the rest of which were all taken by ISIL. However, a handful of infirm, handicapped, elderly Christians were left behind in hospitals. They could not move, as they did not have relatives.

• (1210)

The Daesh, ISIL, went into these hospitals and after the allotted 48 hours had passed for the fatwa, they approached these infirmed handicapped elderly Christians in their hospital beds and told them that if they did not convert on the spot, they would be killed, they would be beheaded in their hospital beds. Let there be no doubt about the kind of barbarism, the kind of evil, with which we are dealing.

In light of this, I believe it is incumbent upon us to act for humanitarian reasons. I believe doing so is consistent with the principle of the responsibility to protect. Admittedly, the actual incarnation of that doctrine at the United Nations requires the approval of Vladimir Putin and the Chinese politburo. However, we ought not to encumber Canadian policy with the approval of Vladimir Putin. We should be able to act independently to prevent genocide, to prevent yet more victims from being claimed.

We also have a national security imperative to do so because, as members will know, ISIS has explicitly declared war on Canada, has called on its supporters to kill Canadians wherever they find them. It is rather evident that the two terror attacks on Canadian soil that took Patrice Vincent and Nathan Cirillo in October of last year were at least inspired by the barbarism of ISIL.

Had the world not begun to act, had the coalition of some 24 countries involved in the military combat against ISIL in Iraq and Syria not begun last September and October, had the other 40 allied countries supporting non-military action against ISIL not done so, had these things not occurred, it is clear that ISIL would have continued to gain more territory in Iraq, more resources, more oil fields, more wealth, more armaments and, most worrying, more legitimacy in the eyes of those who are susceptible to radicalization.

• (1215)

[*Translation*]

It is one of the threats to Canada. More than 100 Canadians have gone to Syria and Iraq to join this terrorist organization. Obviously, when they return to Canada, they pose a threat to our security. This is also the case in almost every developed country.

We have to show those individuals who are likely to be radicalized and recruited by the group known as the Islamic State that it is not the champion of a caliphate but rather a crazed organization.

*Government Orders**[English]*

That is why the Government of Canada has committed the Royal Canadian Air Force, with six CF-18s, one Polaris aerial refuelling aircraft and two CP-140 modernized Aurora aircraft, to join the allied air combat mission against ISIL targets. It is also why we have committed 69 special operations forces members to an advise, assist and training mission with the Kurdish peshmerga near Erbil in northern Iraq. I am pleased to report that, thanks in part to the brilliant work of our men and women in uniform and our allies, we have moved ISIS from being on the offence of gaining new territory last summer and fall to being on the defence of losing territory now.

We now note ISIL moving some of its heavy equipment that has not yet been struck by allied aerial bombardments from Iraq back into Syria. We hope that, with the assistance of allied air support, Iraqi security forces will in due course launch an effective ground combat counteroffensive in which we will not participate on the ground but which we will support from the air.

All of this indicates that in due course the centre of gravity of the fight against ISIL is likely to move westward into eastern Syria, which is the centre of its operations. Its capital is located in Raqqa in central east Syria. This is an area that for all intents and purposes the brutal Syrian regime has ceded sovereignty over to ISIL.

We therefore believe, pursuant to legal advice received from our own Judge Advocate General and the position taken by President Obama's administration, that we have every legal prerogative to pursue the ISIL targets in eastern Syria, in part at the invitation of the government of Iraq under article 51 of the United Nations Charter to give practical expression to the collective right of self-defence.

I believe this modest expansion of the mission and the one year horizon proposed in the motion provides precisely the kinds of rules of engagement that our military need to play a meaningful role in this international coalition.

We ought not to expect others, like the Netherlands or Australia, France or Britain or our Arab partners, to do all of the difficult heavy lifting. This is a responsible democracy. Our country is a champion of human dignity and freedom. We must act now, as we always have through our history, to defend those values and indeed our own interests.

• (1220)

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister is simple. He knows full well that we must take very seriously the fact that we are asking our soldiers to put their lives in danger by participating in a foreign military mission. As the federal MP who represents the riding where CFB Bagotville is located, I take this mission very seriously because I know the men and women who might be called on to participate in this mission.

Therefore, I am asking the Conservative minister whether CFB Bagotville will be asked to participate in this extended mission. I know that it was mostly CFB Cold Lake that participated in the first phase of the intervention in Iraq.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question. He is right because until now the CF-18s that have flown to Kuwait for the air strikes against the Islamic State in Iraq have been from CFB Cold Lake. I cannot say exactly which resources will be deployed. That is obviously up to the commanders of our military forces. They will decide which bases and squadrons will participate, depending on their needs and resources.

*[English]*

Which squadrons will be called upon to contribute is a question I will leave to our military commanders to decide in future rotations for the operations out of Kuwait. However, there are periodic rotations of equipment and personnel. We will notify the member in the House if there are changes in this respect.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was reading a while ago that the Parliamentary Budget Officer claimed that budget cuts had harmed the military's capacity to undertake missions in the long term. It looks like we will be in this conflict for quite a while, based on what the government has said.

Apparently Canada only spends about 1% of its GDP on the military, whereas Canada's allies, Britain and the U.S. notably, have asked that we spend 2% of GDP on our military. Therefore, does the government plan to cede to our the request of allies that we spend 2% of GDP on the military?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Speaker, I should point out that since our government came to office in 2006, we have increased the budget for the Department of National Defence from \$14.3 billion in 2005 to \$20.1 billion, which will be the full and final estimates for the current fiscal year. That represents a 27% increase, vaster than the increase in inflation or the economy during that period, at a time during which most of our principal allies had been reducing their military budgets in absolute terms.

We increased the automatic escalator for the DND budget so it receives a 2% increase every year, effectively protecting the DND budget from inflation. No other department benefits from that. It also has a special capital accrual budget for procurement of equipment. By the way, next Monday I will be receiving our fifth new C-17 Globemaster strategic airlift airplane at CFB Trenton.

We have made important investments. Most important, the men and women of the forces are able to do the job we assign to them. In many missions Canada has been punching above its weight. We will continue to give them the resources they need.

I can confirm for the House that the government will be allocating to the Department of National Defence incremental resources above its baseline budget to cover the incremental costs associated with Operation Impact in Iraq and Syria.

*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Éleine Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to join with my colleagues in this very important debate we are having in the House today on the government's motion to extend Canada's combat mission in Iraq.

Before I begin my speech, however, I want to thank my colleague from Ottawa Centre, who spoke a little earlier in this debate. I particularly want to thank him for the amendment he moved. The amendment really highlights the actions Canada could take immediately to help the victims of ISIL's atrocities.

I am glad that some measure of calm has been restored in the House. It was a little noisy on this side. I hope my colleagues across the way will pay attention to what I have to say. That way, it will be easier for them to ask pertinent questions, or so we can hope.

To get back to my speech, as I was saying earlier, the NDP, through my colleague from Ottawa Centre, has tabled a proposal that would allow Canada to have a real impact and save civilian lives immediately. That is the NDP's primary concern at this time. Millions of people have been displaced as a result of the atrocities taking place right now in Iraq and Syria. Those are the people we should be helping immediately.

No one on either side of this House would deny that ISIL has committed absolutely atrocious acts of violence against civilians. I will not go through all the incidents that are reported regularly in the media. We hear about them all the time, and we are all shocked and horrified by the atrocities reported. We are all aware that ISIL represents a threat to Canada and the rest of the world and that we need to act. However, it is not through today's motion by this government that Canada will have the kind of impact it should have or be able to play the kind of role it should play.

The Conservatives have been completely vague on this since the beginning. Even back when we were still talking about a one-month mission to advise and support, the government was sharing very few details despite the many questions being asked in the House. That turned into a six-month air strike mission, which morphed into a front-line combat mission that, unfortunately, we were not informed about. The government will try to deny that fact, but the evidence is clear. We know the facts. Unfortunately, Sergeant Doiron died just a few hundred metres from the front line. Now the government is about to commit us to a one-and-a-half-year mission, or so it says. It is trying to convince Canadians that this is truly the only possible way of overcoming ISIL, but there has not been a real plan since the beginning, and there is still no plan. The government has not shared a single specific objective or even an exit strategy.

We have a proposal for a mission of one and a half years, but if we look at what happened in Afghanistan, we were there for 12 years. We had a similar proposal then too: relatively short missions, lasting only a few months or just a few years. However, we were there for 12 years. We do not really know where we are going with what is being presented to us right now. The Conservatives are not capable of being honest with Canadians about the real role of our soldiers on the ground. They are not even capable of being honest with the troops waiting at home.

We were greatly saddened, but also surprised, to learn of Sergeant Doiron's death near the front lines, when we had been clearly told in this House that our troops were not supposed to accompany Iraqi troops to the front lines. According to the text of the motion the House voted on, that was very clear. However, we are faced with a completely different situation. The government is playing with words and is asking us to trust it blindly to ensure our security. It has been caught off guard. The Conservatives are saying that they will drop a few bombs here and there and that they will feel better because they will appear to be doing something.

• (1225)

However, in reality, Canada is not contributing as much as it could be. Frankly, I am wondering how Canadians can trust a government that refuses to be transparent about the most basic things. Elected officials in the other allied countries in the coalition have been more forthcoming.

For example, in the United States, President Obama was very clear. He presented the plan and objectives to both parliamentarians and the public. Americans were even told how much the mission would cost. It is extraordinary. Here, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has to fight and use information from the Americans and others to try to estimate the cost of the Canadian mission in Iraq. Under these circumstances, I do not see how we can give the government a blank cheque and tell it to go ahead and extend the mission in Iraq.

What is worse, the government is now proposing that we drop bombs on Syria, or in other words that we side with Bashar al-Assad's regime. That is an absolutely incomprehensible decision. Earlier, I heard the Minister of National Defence criticize the NDP for abandoning its commitment to preventing genocide. How can he accuse those who oppose extending the mission in Iraq of supporting the genocidal activity of the Islamic State and then propose joining forces directly with Bashar al-Assad's regime? That argument does not make any sense.

The country has been in a state of civil war for at least four years now. The civilian population is being slaughtered. Horrific things are happening there. Schools and hospitals are being bombed and children are the victims of horrible crimes. Civilians are being subjected to chemical weapons attacks by their own government, and Canada is suggesting playing Bashar al-Assad's game, knowing full well that he has used the Islamic State at various points in the conflict. We would be falling right into his trap if we decide to intervene on the ground.

This is a legal mess, since by explicitly asking for permission from Bashar al-Assad, as the Prime Minister told the House a few months ago he would do, we are giving legitimacy to the regime. If we decide to completely ignore this provision of international law, we are flouting international conventions and international law.

*Government Orders*

The government has already made a mockery of the notion of international law, but this is an essential principle. Canada is a democratic country, which means that we must comply with the conventions we have signed and negotiated over the years with other countries. Canada could do much better than aligning itself with the Bashar al-Assad regime. I cannot stress that enough.

Everything seems so simple to the Conservatives. As I said earlier, they will carry out a few air strikes and then withdraw once they are satisfied with their intervention. However, what will we leave behind after this military intervention? We will leave a political vacuum that will be filled by other groups that could be worse than the Islamic State. We do not know what is coming. The Conservatives think that their quick-fix solutions are just what is needed, but they could actually make the situation worse.

I want to share a quote from an article Pierre Asselin wrote yesterday in *Le Soleil*, which summarizes quite well the problem we are facing:

Jihadism feeds on the chaos and violence that lead to structural collapse. In the absence of a strategy to remove Assad, victories against the Islamic State could be fleeting. Is the strategy to push ISIL out of Iraq or to fight it as far as its Syrian strongholds? Who would fill the void left by a hypothetical defeat of ISIL in Syria? If our intervention enables the Syrian regime to recover the territory lost to Islamist zealots, we will never be forgiven by its millions of victims.

That is what we need to keep in mind, and that is why the NDP is proposing that we help the civilians who are going through terrible situations. There are victims of sexual violence and horrendous abuse who need our help right now. Canada has expertise in this area.

• (1230)

We can help them and ensure that the refugee camps are winterized to prevent further deaths.

During question period I hope to have the opportunity to speak more to the NDP's proposed solutions. Frankly, in light of everything I mentioned, it is impossible for my colleagues and me to support the proposal to extend the mission, as moved by the Conservatives.

• (1235)

[*English*]

**Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my friend across the way and I serve on the national defence committee together. She comes from a military family and always provides interesting commentary and input to our debates.

I have to point out that in no way is the Government of Canada working to support the Assad regime in Syria. We recognize that this is a brutal regime that has used chemical weapons on its own people, killed thousands of people, and displaced millions. We are hoping that the U.S.-led coalition will find a diplomatic and political solution to the civil war in Syria.

Is the member saying that we should turn a blind eye to the ISIL terrorists who are trying to establish a caliphate in eastern Syria and Iraq? Is she saying that we should allow them to entrench themselves and to generate revenues to ensure they have the artillery and heavy equipment to fight in the region and to launch terrorist attacks around the world, including here in Canada, whom they have sworn

is an enemy? Is she saying that we turn our back on all of the innocent victims who have been brutalized by the genocide carried out by the ISIL jihadists?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Éline Michaud:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague opposite for his kind words. He gives me new hope that we can occasionally find colleagues we can work with on the other side. I would like to return the compliment.

However, what he seems to be ignoring here is that although this mission would not provide direct and outright support for the regime of Bashar al-Assad, going along with him and conducting air strikes in Syria would be giving him a form of tacit support. We need to keep that in mind.

The NDP has never said that we should simply turn our backs on the victims of the Islamic State. On the contrary. We are asking the government to act now and provide victims with the resources and help they need right now. There is a desperate need for drinking water, drugs and assistance to victims of sexual violence. As I mentioned earlier, children have been separated from their parents, among other things.

There are millions of things that Canada could do right now to help the victims of the Islamic State and save lives. We could also use our diplomatic resources to try to help Iraq and Syria build their institutions, which could then protect civilians and ensure that Iraqi and Syrian law enforcement agencies could do their job and properly protect their people.

**Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there is one thing we must not forget. Every time we try to examine the roots of the chaos in that region, the members opposite carefully avoid looking at the past.

When the crisis started in Syria, Canada was the country's second-largest foreign investor. A Canadian company was supplying electricity and managing the entire infrastructure that provided electricity to three-quarters of the country. The company was forced to stop doing that when the United Nations imposed sanctions.

It is easy to accuse us of supporting Bashar al-Assad's regime and ignoring the cruelty of these barbarians. I think we need to look at what our allies are doing. Right now, Wahhabi units are training in the Golan Heights, and when the Syrian army tries to attack them, those units are being defended by the Israeli army.

The situation is more complicated than it looks, and if we act without a plan, we will cause more chaos, which will claim even more innocent victims.

**Ms. Éline Michaud:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very relevant comment that reveals, as he explained so eloquently, how complex everything happening in the Middle East is in general.



*Government Orders*

That is why an intervention as simplistic as the one proposed by the Conservatives—bombing all over the place and hoping that will solve the problem—is problematic. Members of ISIL are blending in with local populations. It is very difficult to figure out which rebel groups in Syria we should be helping and which groups are committing other atrocities against people. It is extremely complex. It is our duty here in the House to have a much more in-depth debate that sets aside the dogmatic approach we all too often see here.

● (1240)

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to rise in the House to participate in this important debate.

It is important to remember that our Conservative government is the one that committed to consulting Parliament regarding Canada's involvement in military engagements overseas. The reason why I am here today is that this is a specific kind of military engagement because it does not involve a state in the traditional sense but an entity that refers to itself as the Islamic State.

I would like to remind the House that these jihadi terrorists have declared war not only on Canada, but also on our French, British, Australian and Danish allies, who have all been the victims of terrorist attacks. Members will remember the attack on *Charlie Hebdo* and the Hyper Cacher supermarket in Paris. They will remember the terrorist attacks that occurred in Sydney, Australia, during the holidays and the more recent attacks in Denmark. These terrorists targeted Canada, urging supporters to attack disbelieving Canadians in any manner and going so far as to vow that we should not feel secure even in our homes.

[*English*]

I should apologize for saying this, but to illustrate the horrific threats that we Canadians and all of our ally countries are facing, here is what the spokesperson for the so-called Islamic State said:

If you can kill a disbelieving American or European—especially the spiteful and filthy French—or an Australian, or a Canadian, or any other disbeliever from the disbelievers waging war, including the citizens of the countries that entered into a coalition against the Islamic State, then rely upon Allah, and kill him in any manner...

These bone-chilling statements are precisely why I am standing up in the House and supporting our actions both here and abroad to target those terrorists and protect our Canadian citizens. As a government, we know that our ultimate responsibility is to protect Canadians from those who would do harm to us and to our families.

We have seen first hand that this is not a problem in some faraway land. This is not someone else's war, as the leader of the NDP said yesterday. No, it is not.

[*Translation*]

What happened on October 20 in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu was not a traffic accident. A terrorist who wanted to commit a dramatic act of violence for ideological purposes brutally attacked Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, who died at the hands of a terrorist clearly inspired by ISIL.

Earlier this week, on Monday evening, the sister of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent appeared before the committee to support the

measures proposed by our government to fight terrorism, and to show us the dozens, hundreds, if not thousands of letters and messages of support she has received not only from across Quebec and Canada, but from around the world. Families have sent handmade cards to show their support for Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent's mother and entire family, who have been devastated by this heinous crime. As Louise Vincent put it so well, an act of terrorism touches more than just one community; it touches Canada as a whole, and the entire world.

That is why we have a moral responsibility to take the necessary measures to prevent something like this from ever happening again. Since this was a terrorist-inspired attack, we clearly see the relationship and the connection between the measures we are taking here in Canada to fight the terrorist threat and the measures we are taking in the Middle East to attack that hotbed of violence and terrorism.

On October 22, Corporal Nathan Cirillo was murdered. As he stood guard at the National War Memorial—the very symbol of the sacrifice made by all the Canadians who served their country in times of war in defence of peace and freedom—he was murdered by another terrorist inspired by the extremist ideology of the Islamic State. He was a target simply because he wore the uniform of the Canadian Armed Forces in his own country, in times of peace, to commemorate the sacrifice of those who gave their lives for their homeland, for our homeland.

That is why Canada cannot stand on the sidelines, which is what the Liberals and New Democrats would have us do in the face of this threat. On the contrary, we are a partner of the free and democratic countries against the Islamic State. We are a partner of this international coalition to defend our rights, our freedoms and our security here on Canadian soil.

It is important to combat terrorism abroad, but we must also combat the ideologies that inspire people to radicalize and embrace this violence, both here and abroad.

That is why our Minister of National Defence is participating, with the international coalition, in efforts to degrade the Islamic State's capabilities abroad. That is why our government is committed to taking effective public safety measures to give our law enforcement agencies and police forces the means to respond to the evolving terrorist threat here in Canada. That is also why we introduced a counterterrorism strategy more than two years ago, which the New Democrats did not support. This strategy focuses on preventing radicalization.

We must take concrete action before a criminal act takes place and before young people become radicalized and want to travel abroad to commit terrorist acts or, even worse, commit them here. This strategy has four elements: prevent, detect, deny terrorists the opportunity to act and respond to the terrorist threat.

*Government Orders*

• (1250)

[English]

We also passed the Combating Terrorism Act, which made it illegal to travel for terrorist purposes. This is an important legislation to combat the recent phenomenon of western-based individuals, including, unfortunately, a number of Canadians, who have become radicalized and are seeking to travel to Iraq and Syria to fight with the Islamic State.

However, we must go further, because as we speak, we do not have the capability to prevent these individuals from boarding an airplane if we have reason to believe that they are willing to commit a terrorist attack. That is why the legislation before the House, the anti-terrorism act, is so important.

I am more than open to answer questions, but we need to track terrorists abroad and at home. That is why this government has a coherent approach to target those who want to harm us here on Canadian soil.

[Translation]

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to ask the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness questions about government Motion No. 17.

I am very proud of my party's position. In our careers as politicians, we may never be asked to make a decision more important than the one we are making today. I take this role very seriously. I always take exception when opposing positions are attacked as being ridiculous or are belittled. That certainly does nothing to elevate the debate.

That being said, the minister made a point of talking about something he might be more familiar with in his role as the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, and that is deradicalization, if I can put it that way. I am curious to know whether in Motion No. 17, the minister sees any commitment by his government to counter this radicalization on Canadian soil. I do not see any such commitment in any part of the motion. No reference is made to it whatsoever.

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. I believe it is important to refer to the facts in a debate. When our government wanted to introduce a counterterrorism strategy, the NDP opposed it. That is a fact. The votes are on the record.

Likewise, the opposition did not support us when we wanted to ensure that passports are revoked from people who travel abroad to take part in terrorist activities, let alone when it came to revoking the citizenship of those convicted of terrorist activities. Those are the facts.

As we speak, my Conservative colleagues are listening to evidence, such as that provided by Louise Vincent, the sister of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent. This morning, we heard from the representative of a Muslim association who supported Bill C-51.

That anti-terrorism bill contains a number of provisions to improve our radicalization prevention measures. The NDP does not want us to have effective tools to protect the public.

[English]

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there do not seem to be that many people interested in discussing this matter on the other side, but I appreciate the opportunity after my learned colleague.

I listened intently when the Minister of National Defence spoke, and similar to the issue that my colleague has just raised, the Minister of Public Safety is saying that this motion also deals with trying to prevent radicalization in this country, which seems to be absent in the motion.

Another thing is absent in this motion. Even though the Minister of National Defence started out by saying that the motion is all about humanitarian aid, invoking our troops in military combat, there is absolutely nothing in the motion that mentions humanitarian aid.

The minister spoke of supporting greater humanitarian aid to these areas under strife and turmoil, which is appreciated. If the minister is so strongly committed to what he has said, then it would follow that he would support the amendments that we put forward that call for greater engagement, such as Canada boosting humanitarian aid, stabilizing neighbouring countries and strengthening political institutions. Does the minister in fact support those measures that we have put forward?

• (1255)

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** Mr. Speaker, there is a clear link between terrorism that took place here and what is taking place in the Islamic State. That is what my speech was all about.

It is because people here on our Canadian soil are inspired and activated by this terrorist threat abroad. The core of the problem is over there, and it is also here. That is why we have to work on both fronts. Attacking one does not excuse not attacking the other.

We have seen Canadians willing to travel abroad. We have begun to destroy and degrade the capability of ISIS with our allies. We cannot stop halfway. We have to go on and continue with what we have been successfully doing.

That is why the mission abroad is important. That is why our actions here are important.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the issue before this House right now is a serious one, an issue that raises serious questions, and I think it gets to the heart of some of the most important and profound subjects that can be debated in the House of Commons.

We have the spectre of violent movements in the world, and that spectre is real. It is serious. Acts of oppression, of kidnapping, of rape, of ethnic and cultural targeting, of armed conflict and violence are present all over the world.

We have ISIL in Iraq, Boko Haram in Nigeria, events in Ukraine, civil war in Syria, recent conflicts in Israel and Gaza, tension in the Caucasus between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and conflicts all over Africa and in the second and third world.

*Government Orders*

The government today is asking this Parliament and the Canadian people to commit Canada to war in one of these conflicts. The Conservatives assert that the acts of ISIL in Iraq are of such a nature that war is the only reasonable response of Canada, and that ISIL in Iraq represents a threat to Canadians here at home. I respectfully disagree with these assertions.

I have been privileged to represent the good people of Vancouver Kingsway in this House for the last seven years, and we debate many important issues and have done so over that time, but in my view, no issue is more important or warrants more serious scrutiny and attention than discussion of committing our troops and committing Canada to war.

I would like to start in my remarks with a review of some history. The old adage that those who do not pay attention to history are doomed to repeat it, I think, is time-tested and true. I will review what has been the experience of the west in terms of western military interventions in the Middle East.

Let us just take a brief synopsis of the last 30 years. In Afghanistan in the 1980s, the United States armed the Taliban. At that time the Taliban was the Americans' friend when it was attacking the Soviets. It did not matter to the Americans at that time that the Taliban's orthodoxy, doctrines, or dogma were oppressive, misogynist, sexist, and culturally intolerant and insensitive. At that time the United States armed it because they had a common mutual enemy.

Then 9/11 happened. The U.S. demanded the Afghani government deliver up what it believed were the perpetrators of 9/11 who had been, in its view, hiding in Afghanistan. When the Afghani government either could not or would not do so, the United States and a coalition of western countries attacked Afghanistan, including Canada.

Canada was mired in Afghanistan for 10 years. We lost well over 150 brave soldiers. Thousands more Canadian soldiers were injured, traumatized to this day, and Canada spent billions of dollars in Afghanistan.

What is Afghanistan like today? It is not a democracy. Tribal divisions are intact. Opium production is at record levels. It is a country that has been devastated, where western values have failed to take root and in fact are rejected today as strongly as they have ever been.

Let us talk about Libya. Just a few years ago in this House the government stood here and said it had to commit Canadian Forces to enforce a no-fly zone in Libya, and the opposition, despite what the Minister of National Defence has erroneously told the Canadian public, endorsed that mission. We warned, however, at that time that we would not support a mission that morphed into a regime-change one, and that is exactly what happened.

We committed to a mission that eventually resulted in the removal of the Gadhafi regime in Libya, and what happened as a result of that military intervention? The country descended into chaos, with violence on an almost unprecedented level today. There is no democracy, stability, justice, or rule of law in Libya today. I have not heard the Conservatives say a word about the situation in Libya since they urged the Canadian public to go to Libya to remove a despotic

government, and they have run away from accountability for those actions.

• (1300)

We have the other example of Iraq. I have a feeling of *déjà vu* today, because this is not the first time that a western country has been asked to intervene in Iraq in a military manner. In 2003, the United States led a coalition and attacked Iraq. This was based, as we now know, on fabrications and outright deception. Iraq was accused of importing yellow cake uranium from Africa to fuel its nuclear program. It was accused of developing weapons of mass destruction. American diplomats at the highest levels asserted that this was the case. It turned out that these were outright lies, absolute fabrications.

Massive military force was unleashed on Iraq. Hundreds of thousands of people were killed. Massive infrastructure damage totalling in the billions of dollars was inflicted on Iraq. Regime change occurred. Saddam Hussein was removed and replaced with what the west said was a better government, the government of Mr. Maliki. What happened after we installed him? There was brutal oppression of minorities, corruption on a massive scale, no democracy taking root, and a country shattered, divided, and socially fractured.

As a result of massive bombing in 2003, which we said was going to restore democracy, human rights, and the rule of law to Iraq, where are we today in 2015? We have ISIL in Iraq. One could argue that not only did military intervention not accomplish any of the goals that always are the goals asserted at the beginning of a mission, but they created the opposite situation. There was no ISIS or ISIL back in 2003. There is today.

If bombing and military intervention is a way to make Iraq and countries around that region safer and more conforming to western norms, then that would have been the case after massive bombing and military intervention occurred for eight years and eight months, from 2003 to 2011. Thirty years of a western approach to countries in the Middle East and that region based on violence, based on military intervention, and based on deception, have resulted in only one conclusion for anyone who is viewing the situation objectively: an utter, absolute failure to meet any of the objectives that were stated at the beginning of those missions. Worse, there is a complete absence of accountability on behalf of governments like the Canadian government, like the American government, or the British government, who told the people of these countries that they should be intervening in these countries to make their population safer. It has made the world more dangerous.

What should Canada do? Canadians whom I talk to and represent want a different foreign policy from that characterized by the current government, different from the one characterized by war and military intervention and demonizing and jingoistic exhortations to violence. They want a Canada that resorts to our history, which characterizes our foreign policy for most of our time as a country, where Canada was a peacekeeper, where Canada was a peacemaker, where Canada was regarded as an honest broker on the world stage, where Canada was regarded as a fair dealer, where we practised diplomacy and took a leadership role.

*Government Orders*

There are other ways that Canada can be addressing this very serious problem. We could shift Canada's warlike approach to one of democracy building. We could help countries like Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen develop democratic responsible governments that build respectful rights-based societies. We can help these countries build strong civil societies, assist with constitution making, help them build public infrastructure, help them raise the educational levels of their populations, help with poverty alleviation, provide economic aid, and provide humanitarian assistance. These are the roles that stand in contrast to the one being proposed to us here today, which is, "Here is how we can help the people of Iraq: We will go in and add more violence to a violent situation". The biggest myth of all is that this will make Canadians safer.

• (1305)

The truth is that we have not had one ISIL-inspired terrorist attack on this soil yet, objectively; not one. However, if Canada commits to force and starts bombing ISIL and ISIS positions in Iraq, it is a matter of logic that it would increase the chances that those people would feel entitled to take retributive action here in Canada.

To keep Canadians safe and to restore Canada to a position on the world stage that Canadians want, I urge all members of this House to reject this ill-conceived motion that is not based in fact and has even less logic and principle behind it than any other motion I have seen in this House.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is much to discuss about the motion that is before us today. I know that I was really taken when the leader of the Liberal Party emphasized how important it is for us to understand what is happening in Syria, where the government is trying to move us into taking action.

It was interesting when he cited that the United Nations is telling us that, after four years of all-out war, more than 11 million Syrians have been driven from their homes, which is over half the population. Syrians are fleeing their country by the millions. He said that this exodus of refugees is causing a terrible crisis. In five years of combat, more than 210,000 Syrians have been killed, including more than 10,000 children. This is something that the leader of the Liberal Party brought to the House's attention in addressing the motion.

The question I have for the member is this. Does he believe that the government is even considering the many other options for a role for Canada to play in assisting, let alone what is taking place in Syria today?

**Mr. Don Davies:** Mr. Speaker, the short answer is no. I do not believe that the government is seriously considering that.

I want to quote one of my constituents who wrote to me and who answered that question directly. He wrote to me and said:

The "conservative" election propaganda is being unbundled and the Prime Minister seems to be shifting his strategic emphasis from the economy to terrorism. Prime Minister Harper is reported to have said that "Jihadi terrorism is one of the most dangerous enemies our world has ever faced" and "a great evil has descended on our world." Does this alarming rhetoric sound familiar? Have we forgotten the "axis of evil" speech by President Bush more than a decade ago?

Information and government actions are again being shaped to sell security and military policies? In a democracy perception management is not a substitute for

government accountability and transparency? A discussion of the recent experience, current objectives and policy options would better serve our democracy?

That was Dr. Robin Hanvelt who wrote to me.

The nub of what he is saying is that he, as a Canadian voter, is perceiving that the current government is using the external threat of ISIS and ISIL to shape the political debate in this country, not coincidentally because we have an election coming up.

I do not think there is a real consideration, as my friend suggested, of alternatives to deal with the real humanitarian issues facing people in Syria and Iraq.

• (1310)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Before we go to questions and comments, I will just remind all hon. members that it is not permitted, of course, to use the names of other hon. members, even when the names actually appear in something that the hon. member might be citing in the course of his comments. I am sure the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway is aware of that; nonetheless, those things do occur from time to time.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, does my colleague believe that, by using the same recipe in Syria as in Iraq, there is a slim chance that the outcome will be different?

We are seeing what happens wherever this type of intervention has been undertaken, like in Libya. Libya was freed from a horrible dictator, and it is now under two dictatorships, one in Parliament and one on a boat, off the coast. Libya is now the most unsafe country in the entire region.

Is it not a bit ridiculous to imagine that the same recipe will yield a different outcome?

[*English*]

**Mr. Don Davies:** Mr. Speaker, it is my view that we cannot bomb a nation into changing its values. We cannot force a country by force of arms to build a legitimate homegrown democracy or the rule of law. If that were the case, then today we would have thriving democracies in Afghanistan, Libya, Iraq, and Syria. We do not.

The truth is, after decades of military intervention, billions of taxpayer dollars, and massive loss of life, we do not have democratic regimes. We do not have peaceful societies. We do not have harmonious countries. We do not have functioning countries in those areas.

Just as a matter of fact and evidence, I would think this would be enough to prove to the government that adding more bombing and violence to the situation in Iraq, regardless of how serious the ISIL situation is, is not an approach that is going to make anyone any safer, not there or here.

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand in the House to speak on an issue that is of grave importance to Canadians and to free and democratic societies.

*Government Orders*

Today's debate on Canada's role in the international effort to combat ISIL is, indeed, an important one. As we all know, ISIL is, simply put, a group of inhuman barbarians. It exists to create havoc and to infringe on global security from the Middle East to right here at home. It is a threat to basic humanity and is a murderous threat to even innocent children.

The opposition does not want to stand up to this barbaric organization motivated by a culture of brutality and murder. Listen to the words of the NDP leader only last week on this very issue. He stated:

[T]here's no reason for us to be involved....

Although no one's trying to understate the horrors of what's occurring there, the question is, "Is that Canada's fight?"

I take exception to these comments from the opposition that pay more lip service than actual contribution to dealing with the horrors ISIL has wrought, especially on the most innocent of them all, that being children.

Canada cannot simply stand by as ISIL barbarians slaughter innocent men, women, and children. As it collects women and children as sex slaves and breeds terrorism globally, as we have seen right here on Canadian soil, the leader of the NDP loudly proclaims that this is not Canada's fight. However, throughout our history, Canada has stood up when peace, safety, and security were threatened. As a nation, we have always been deeply committed to defending freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

I know it will be uncomfortable for some to hear, but I want the House to fully understand the evil we are actually dealing with. It is all too easy in this debate to consider a mission against ISIL in the abstract, to forget the unspeakable crimes against humanity committed by this radicalized group. That is why I am going to speak of the unspeakable. For that, I will refer to the February 2015 report of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child entitled, "Concluding observations on the combined second to fourth periodic reports of Iraq". I will quote from that report, which states:

The Committee abhors and condemns the targeted and brutal killings of children by the so-called ISIL and in particular: (a) The systematic killing of children belonging to religious and ethnic minorities by the so-called ISIL, including several cases of mass executions of boys, as well as reports of beheadings and crucifixions of children and the burying of children alive....

The report further goes further to state that there are a high number of children who have been abducted by the so-called ISIL:

...many of whom are severely traumatized from witnessing the murder of their parents and are subjected to physical and sexual assault.

Let those words sink in: beheadings, crucifixions, and burying children alive. Again, I ask the opposition, should Canada simply stand by on preventing these horrendous acts committed against children and not consider it Canada's fight?

I ask the opposition to read this United Nations report. I ask it to fully grasp the inhumane and deplorable acts ISIL has committed, acts such as, quoting again directly from the report:

...the continuing sexual enslavement of children since the emergence of the so-called ISIL, in particular of children belonging to minority groups who are held by the so-called ISIL. It notes with the utmost concern the "markets" set up by ISIL, in which they sell abducted children and women attaching price tags to them; and the sexual enslavement of children detained in makeshift prisons of ISIL....

●(1315)

Renate Winter, the well-respected international judicial expert who founded the International Institute for the Rights of the Child, is an expert who helped draft the United Nations report. I ask the opposition to hear her words. She stated:

We are really deeply concerned at torture and murder of those children, especially those belonging to minorities, but not only from minorities. The scope of the problem is huge.

Ms. Winter went on to say:

We have had reports of children, especially children who are mentally challenged, who have been used as suicide bombers, most probably without their even understanding.

Mentally challenged children have been used as suicide bombers and other children have been tortured mercilessly. I know that many members of this House have been blessed to have children of their own, and some, like me, have grandchildren. We must think of our own children and our own grandchildren being tortured, sold as slaves, forced to be suicide bombers, raped, and murdered. That is the stark reality of what ISIL is doing as we speak.

We can look at what ISIL did in places like Ar-Raqqa last May. We can look at the photos of people being crucified or decapitated. We can think about the Yezidis, a peaceful religious minority group in a mountain town that was targeted and surrounded by ISIL until its members faced starvation, dehydration, and eventually death. Some escaped, but many did not.

We can look at the many videos of the beheadings ISIL has produced and posted widely for all to see, such as of James Foley, a freelance journalist, who had his head sawed off as the ISIL barbarians cheered. We can watch the more recent videos of ISIL beheading 21 Coptic Christians on the shores of Tripoli. This is the reality of the ISIL terror we all face.

Does the NDP not think this is Canada's fight? I suggest that it is. Everyone is disgusted and repulsed by these acts performed by a death cult of barbaric thugs with no moral compass. Why would the NDP have Canada stand by and do nothing?

Even though I have spent over 40 years in law enforcement combatting the worst criminals and witnessing horrific crimes, I can only begin to grasp the destruction and havoc created by ISIL. Families have been murdered and destroyed. Mothers' hearts have been broken. Children have been buried alive.

Canada has a duty, and indeed a responsibility, to confront this evil alongside our growing list of allies from all regions of the globe, a coalition, of which Canada has been very much a part, that to date has halted the advance of ISIL, regained strategic territory, and significantly degraded ISIL's capabilities.

The opposition would take an isolationist stand. The opposition has claimed that this is a distant threat, not Canada's concern or problem. However, that is not the case here. From the great wars to the Canadian peacekeeping missions in places like Rwanda, the Congo, and elsewhere, Canada has stood up to terror.

*Government Orders*

I would also remind Canadians of the attacks and threats made by ISIL against Canada right here at home. Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent was killed by a violent jihadist in Quebec, and Corporal Nathan Cirillo was murdered point blank here in Ottawa.

Make no mistake: the international jihadi movement, ISIL, has declared war on Canada. As a government, it is our moral duty to protect Canadians from those who would do us harm. To sit on the sidelines is to let evil thrive.

I hope the opposition will join our government in support of this mission. However, with or without the support of the Liberals and the NDP, we will confront this evil and protect the safety and security of Canadians. Our government is proud of the work done by our brave men and women in uniform. We will continue to support them as we continue to fight this evil.

● (1320)

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I resent the expression from the minister that the NDP stands for nothing on the situation.

I read the amendments that were proposed by our foreign affairs critic carefully. Here are just a few:

...boost humanitarian aid in areas where there would be immediate, life-saving impact, including assisting refugees with basic shelter and food needs;

....work with our allies in the region to stabilize neighbouring countries, strengthen political institutions and assist these countries in coping with an influx of refugees;

...contribute to the fight against ISIL, including military support for the transportation of weapons;

...provide assistance to investigation and prosecution of war crimes;

...increase assistance for the care and resettlement of refugees impacted by this conflict;

...put forward a robust plan of support for communities and institutions working on de-radicalization and counter-radicalization;

Are all these nothing in the eyes of the minister?

**Hon. Julian Fantino:** Mr. Speaker, if the NDP is really serious about fulfilling the responsibilities that we as Canadians have toward countering this very serious threat that is in fact also targeting Canada and Canadians, they should join with us and champion this work. We could all feel that much better for our collective involvement here.

Just to be specific on the issue of humanitarian aid, Canada is already doing a great deal of work in that particular area. It is a two-pronged approach, involving both military support and humanitarian aid. The military components allow for the aid to flow to more areas and allow for more accountability and security. That, of course, is what aid workers need. We cannot help these people in need with this threat looming over their heads.

● (1325)

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was listening with interest to the minister's remarks. I was very disappointed that it was really a long list of graphic atrocities.

Yes, we understand those atrocities are happening, but we are trying to have a debate in this country, a debate that educates people

as to the complexities of the situation, a debate that educates people as to what is in the Canadian interest, what is good public policy, and what the ways are that Canada can contribute.

The minister wants to just narrow this down to the Conservative playbook, which, in a previous bill with a previous minister, was called "You are with us or you are with the child pornographers." Canadians do not buy that kind of simplistic rhetoric, and I would appreciate it if the minister could discuss the importance of the diplomatic efforts to bring people together in this region so that there is respect for minority communities as ISIL is removed from areas.

As to the ethnic cleansing that has happened in some of those areas, how can that be stopped through the good work of the government and the minister's departmental officials in the Department of Foreign Affairs?

**Hon. Julian Fantino:** Mr. Speaker, none of these things are mutually exclusive.

As I indicated earlier, we are operating on the humanitarian front very actively and every effectively, to the extent that we can. However, until such time as the threat of terrorism and the atrocities and inhumanities that are taking place in that part of the country are stopped, the effort and impact will be greatly diminished.

We are not alone. From what I understand, most Canadians are on side. Let me read a quote:

The Conference of Defence Associations welcomes the government's decision to extend the military mission against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

They go on to say:

ISIL represents a direct threat to Canadian national security since it has singled out Canada as an enemy and urged its members and supporters to kill Westerners, military and civilian alike. The group also serves as an inspiration for lone-wolf terrorist attacks, such as those committed...

here in Ottawa and of course in Quebec.

**Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by pointing out what I think is obvious for many here. The position that the Prime Minister has taken for the last couple of days in the House suggests a serious continuity with the position he took in 2003. He was one of the cheerleaders and apologists for George W. Bush's decision to engage in a manifestly illegal and profoundly stupid invasion of Iraq.

There were two cheerleaders of note at that time. One was south of the border and became the leader of the Liberal Party. That was Michael Ignatieff. He was immediately recruited by the Liberal elites to become the anointed one. The other was the current Prime Minister. He did not give a hoot then about international law, and he does not now.

All we have to do is look at is the contemptuous response he gave in the House yesterday to the Leader of the Opposition. In the end, what the Prime Minister is telling us is "What I say is the law." That is how he is used to running—and, frankly, ruining—this parliamentary democracy.

[*Translation*]

"I am King. I am the law."

*Government Orders*

[English]

That is the Prime Minister.

We then heard from the Minister of Foreign Affairs today. It was a more measured speech, but at the same time, he slipped. He started saying that if we vote against this motion, we are “voting against” our own soldiers. This kind of argumentation, this kind of attempt to suggest that any concerns about wisdom—and, in this case, lawfulness—is somehow beneath debate in the House of Commons is destructive of our democracy. We talk about a goal of degrading ISIL, ISIS, the Islamic State or whatever it is called, and at the same time we are engaging in debate that helps to degrade democratic discourse in the House of Commons.

One thing that is obvious from the last two days is that the government, or at least the ministers, did not have a clue about what the legal basis would be that they were going to be putting forward. They had not bothered to clarify in their own minds what it was. Their answers were all over the map in the House. Yesterday they were scrambling to cross their *t*'s and dot their *i*'s because they finally acknowledged that if they were going to be following the American model, the justification would be one of collective self-defence of Iraq, for which they need an invitation from Iraq. We will see whether that gets backdated, because there is no invitation from Iraq to go into Syria at the moment. They will also need to write a letter to the UN in the way that the U.S. did in order to go into Syria on September 23, 2014.

What that suggests is that legality is an afterthought. Not knowing and not reading whatever legal opinion they purport to have in order to know how they are allowed to go into Syria, so as to then know what the purpose of the mission can be in law, suggests that it does not matter to them. They are going in for other reasons.

Some of the reasons might be very good ones, in the sense that there is this visceral response to the brutality of ISIS. The imagery from the former minister is of that ilk. The government is mixing in justifications about how maybe this is actually a humanitarian intervention, although I have not heard the government give that as the legal basis. It is also on that side.

Frankly, there is also just politics. The government wants to go in for reasons that have as much to do with electoral politics as they do with the actual need for Canada to be involved in this way, especially by extending the mission to Syria.

We debated this question back in early October. At the time, the motion that was passed by the House included Syria. We knew that it did. It was clear, and there was a condition set by the Prime Minister that Canada would not extend its active mission, particularly the bombing part of it, without the consent of the government of Syria, namely Assad.

The U.S. had already put out its legal rationale for going into Syria a full two to three weeks before, on September 23, 2014. Surely any competent Canadian government and its advisers would know what that rationale was by the time we had the debate in the House, yet the only legal basis that the government put forward then for going into Syria was one of the consent of the Syrian government. No mention was ever made of the U.S. rationale.

Was that because the government had legal advice from somewhere within the government that the U.S. rationale was dubious, or even not valid? If so, how the government went about getting a legal opinion that it liked a lot better is a question that has to be asked.

Maybe there is a hint. Newspaper reports suggests that it was the Judge Advocate General, based in the Department of National Defence, who gave that legal opinion.

● (1330)

It is one, of course, we are never going to see, because the current government will raise the bogus argument of solicitor-client privilege as the reason we cannot see the legal opinion. However, the Judge Advocate General has no business giving legal opinions on *ius ad bellum*, the use of military force as set out in general public international law. That is the role of the legal adviser to the Department of Foreign Affairs, who in every other government and every other Westminster system would be the one giving the opinion.

The question is begged: did the legal adviser give an opinion back in September and October? Was it favourable to the government? If so, why do we not know about it? If it was not favourable to the government, is that why the Department of National Defence has inserted itself and overridden the Department of Foreign Affairs in its proper role of advising the government on the lawfulness of going to war?

These are questions we have to ask. I would remind members that we have asked them and will continue to ask them. We will want to see the legal opinions. It is not for the sake of legality itself, but in order to know what the government sees as the basis for going in and to be able to hold the government to account for the reasons given, under law. It is also in order to be critical, to scrutinize, and have others who are also experts say “case made” or “case not made”.

The fact is that unless the government changes its ways, it is going to say, “Sorry, solicitor-client privilege”, which is so bogus. First of all, the client is the government. Second, this is the ultimate public interest. There is nothing reasonably confidential in what the government hears about whether it can go to war that cannot be shared, not just with Parliament but with Canadians as a whole.

Therefore, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs here in the House, I do ask him to make sure that any legal opinion that has been received by the government is tabled, and tabled forthwith.

I will briefly go over the three kinds of legal justifications that have been circulating.

One is that when things are finally clarified, it is beginning to look like the government realizes that for the Americans, the primary justification is one of collective self-defence of Iraq. Not surprisingly, the U.S. needed Iraq to request it to defend itself against whatever threat it sees coming from Syria. This is based on a very tenuous theory that does not have firm grounding in international law, possibly not even firm grounding in emerging international law: the safe haven theory.

*Government Orders*

The safe haven theory is that if another state is incapable or unwilling to eradicate safe havens from which non-state groups like ISIS are crossing the border into another state, that state can attack at will in order to deal with the threat. The fact is that the leading judgment in international law on this point, from the International Court of Justice in the Nicaragua case in the mid-1980s, specifically said that it is not a basis for exercising the right of collective self-defence.

The leading definition set out by the United Nations in 1974, the Definition of Aggression, does talk about a scenario like this, a scenario of non-state groups crossing borders to attack another state. It is not as if this issue has not arisen. However, the issue is whether another state is sending, by or on behalf of that state, or is substantially involved in sending, armed groups across the border. That does trigger a right of self-defence.

People have cited the 9/11 response. After the towers came down, after that brutal terrorist attack on New York, the response was to go into Afghanistan. People said the attack meant that we can go after any safe haven in response to a non-state terrorist attack.

That is absolutely wrong. At the time, everybody thought and understood that al Qaeda and the Taliban government of Afghanistan were so interpenetrated that any al Qaeda attack was, in effect, one that had the substantial involvement of the Taliban government. That was the basis on which self-defence was exercised, and nobody objected at the time. However, to stretch that into this broader theory requires seeing the legal opinions. Maybe the law has marched on. Despite being a public international lawyer, maybe I have not watched enough in the last five years to know it has, but we need to see to know.

The last thing floating out there, especially coming out of the mouth of the Minister of National Defence, is the idea of a George Bush-style GWOT, a global war on terror. It is the idea that all that is needed is a threat by a non-state group to allow a state to go around the world bombing, whether with drones or airplanes, if another state is somehow or other not doing the job that this state says needs to be done.

The wording of the motion actually plays exactly into that idea, because the new motion—as my colleague, the critic for foreign affairs, brought up earlier today—specifically says that it is not just against ISIS but ISIS allies, which include, for example, Boko Haram in Nigeria.

● (1335)

It also says that the actions Canada can take “include” air strikes in Iraq and Syria. It does not create an exclusive list. There are good reasons the official opposition is asking for legal clarity and to see the legal opinions.

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the comments of my colleague. At one point he said there was something from National Defence overriding Foreign Affairs on these things. These things are done collectively. We are given advice and we are on firm legal footing.

It was of interest to me what he said with respect to solicitor-client privilege. Yes, the government does get legal advice. I think he described it as bogus, but I would suggest to him that the concept of

solicitor-client privilege actually underpins our collective legal system in the country and it is extremely important.

That being said, we have been very clear with respect to article 51 of the UN charter. We have indicated we are on the same legal basis. Iraq has asked for international assistance and we are going to do that.

● (1340)

**Mr. Craig Scott:** Mr. Speaker, first, the hon. minister is a lawyer. He knows that the solicitor-client privilege can be waived by the client. The analogy between private sector solicitor-client privilege and advice the government receives, especially on a question of going to war, is completely inapposite and he knows it.

Second, the government has not been clear. No one on that side could articulate for two days that they were acting in accordance with article 51 of the UN charter. There was so much scrambling going on behind the scenes, it was actually embarrassing.

The last thing is, the minister can reconstruct government relations all he wants but having an opinion from the Department of National Defence, if the newspaper reports are true, that the judge advocate general, as the minister who is now in the House has said, is the one who has given the go-ahead advice, is completely inappropriate unless there is parallel advice coming from the legal adviser of the Department of Foreign Affairs. If there is, we would like to see that opinion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** I would just remind hon. members that they should try to avoid references to the absence or presence of other hon. members in the House as a general matter of routine.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra.

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was interested in the member's comments and his focus on the legal basis for the proposed mission. In fact, in my earlier remarks I made the point right up front that the mission and the motion failed to meet the test of whether they are in the national interest or not. That test failed because the mission has an unclear legal basis, unclear mission objectives and an open-ended scope, which means we could be embroiled for a very long time in a mission that does not have a clear plan or exit strategy.

I want to focus on unclear mission objectives. The member is I am sure aware that the Minister of Defence is saying the objective is to defeat and eliminate ISIL, whereas the Minister of Foreign Affairs is saying the objective is to degrade ISIL, which is a far different objective. Does the member have any comment about the effectiveness of a mission in which the two ministers have totally different views on what the point of the mission is in the first place?

**Mr. Craig Scott:** Mr. Speaker, I do not have any particular views other than to say a well set up question is asked and answered. Both ministers I am sure are capable of dealing with the conflict that exists between their rationales.



*Government Orders*

However, it goes back to the fact that, again, the government is content with wholesale, feel-good arguments in the sense of, let us lash out and attack brutal terrorists. It feels good to all of us. Who does not want to do that? That is the bottom line kind of justification they are getting to. Then, when they are really going for the moral impulse, they talk about all of the brutality. It is correct to be talking about that, but they are not linking it to any specific legal justification either.

All I am asking for, truly, is straightforward clarity. That will also come with seeing the legal opinions, although the government is rather afraid of the legal profession in this country. It is afraid of law professors who give opinions on Bill C-51, for example. It is disdainful of the Canadian Bar Association. I rather doubt it would want to see its legal opinion subject to the scrutiny of other experts.

**Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that we are again discussing Iraq speaks to the gravity of the current situation and to the reality of the struggle that many Iraqis are facing. As the so-called terrorist group ISIL attempts to spread its flawed ideology across Iraq and the country's civilians who stand in the crosshairs. They are targets, unfairly victimized by a group whose only rule is to be ruthless.

We know that ISIL is waging a campaign of terror in Iraq and across the region, preying on the vulnerable to advance its alleged cause and doing so with wanton disregard for any and all who dare stand in its way. This group is morally reprehensible, one that willfully kills innocent children, that murders humanitarian workers and innocent journalists just to make a point and that uses rape as a weapon of war.

It is a group that we must continue to take steps to confront and to degrade, in order to maintain peace and stability in the Middle East and to protect global security, but also, to lessen the incredible burden that has been so unfairly placed upon Iraqi civilians. They are the ones living on the front line of this conflict, the people whose lives have been turned upside down as ISIL has captured vast stretches of territory from the Syrian border in the northwest to the outskirts of Baghdad.

I want to focus on that, on the humanitarian aspects of this crisis and on the role that Canada is playing to help Iraq's children and its terrified mothers and fathers find the relief and safety they so desperately seek. Armed clashes have driven displacement, causing the humanitarian situation in Iraq to rapidly deteriorate. When such violence erupts, not only does it force masses of people to flee their homes and communities, it creates havoc in the entire country. Businesses have trouble operating. People lose their jobs. Food production and clean water services are disrupted. Normal supply routes are blocked. Families are separated and they suffer tremendous shock, especially when losing a parent, a child, a sibling or a friend. They are left to grieve amidst the turmoil of their own circumstances which for many has included fleeing homes, villages and the familiarity of everyday life. There has been concern that children will fall behind in their education because of the disruptions caused by the conflicts and displacements.

Canada is actively working with partners to address children's needs. To date, we have contributed \$8 million to UNICEF's no lost

generation initiative in Iraq, which is providing education and protection assistance to conflict-affected children. We are also working through experienced partners such as Save the Children and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to help provide child-friendly environments for displaced children and to give them the psychosocial support they need. Although conflict is a disruptive force in the lives of children, we must do everything possible to see that their education continues. Education is essential in Iraq right now. It gives children and youth a sense of normalcy, stability and structure. When schools are open, they are places for children to free their minds of the anxiety of war and instead focus on the pursuit of knowledge and improving their skills.

For most Canadians, the situation in Iraq is simply unimaginable. Canadians will say that the actions we have undertaken in response to this crisis are a direct reflection of their own values and of their understanding that a country like ours cannot possibly stand idle while millions of Iraqi civilians are suffering.

● (1345)

Since the beginning of the crisis, Canada has committed \$67.4 million in humanitarian assistance for conflict-affected Iraqis. In addition, we have provided \$9.5 million to respond to the needs of approximately 215,000 Syrian refugees in Iraq. This makes us the fifth-largest donor in response to this crisis. These funds have been provided to United Nations agencies, the International Red Cross movement and non-government organizations to provide life-saving assistance to those who are most in need. In the last six months, we have helped feed 1.7 million people, provide shelter and relief supplies to 1.25 million people and helped with education for half a million children.

Canada's assistance is also supporting organizations that are responding to incidents of sexual and gender-based violence by establishing safe places, providing psychosocial support, specialized health services, case management, community outreach and other services to up to 35,000 women and children. In addition, Canadian contributions include \$10 million to strengthen accountability for sexual and gender-based violence crimes and support victims and additional programming to protect the rights of religious minorities in Iraq and in the region.

Religious persecution of those seeking to practise their faith in a peaceful and secure way is unacceptable to Canada, and we are supporting efforts to assist in the protection of these rights. Through all these actions on the humanitarian front, Canada is showing it stands by the people of Iraq. We will continue to look for more ways to respond to the needs of all Iraqis.

*Government Orders*

In June, Canada established a bilateral development program to address short-term needs and to support resilience and prosperity in Iraq over the long term. This bilateral program will enable communities to cope with increased demand for basic services including water, sanitation and health services; mitigate the negative economic implications; and sustain institutional capacities through this protracted crisis. Canada recognizes that without resilience and hope for a more prosperous future, Iraqi communities will continue to struggle with instability. However, the world must unite to confront and downgrade the ISIL threat. Canada is contributing to the allied effort in order to do just that and to bring some normalcy and stability back to the lives of Iraqi people.

In summary, the military measures we are taking against ISIL do not in any way preclude humanitarian actions. There is no either/or. Canada is the fifth-largest country donor in the humanitarian response to the crisis in Iraq and the sixth-largest donor in Syria. Security on the ground is absolutely essential to providing humanitarian assistance. Degrading the capabilities of ISIL is key to achieving this, while accessing those most in need.

It is concerning to me that the Liberals and the New Democrats failed to acknowledge the real threat posed to Canada by ISIL and the jihadi terrorism. Both leaders had an opportunity to speak to the threat ISIL poses to Canadians, and they opted for partisan attacks over serious dialogue. As I mentioned earlier, it is often innocent civilians in Iraq who are the victims of ISIL, and the focus of my remarks has dealt with Canada's humanitarian response to the crisis. However, ISIL has made clear that it targets, by name, Canada and Canadians.

We cannot protect Canada by simply choosing to ignore this threat. We will not sit on the sidelines, as the Liberals and the New Democrats would have us do. I will be voting in favour of this motion, and I encourage all members of this House to do the same.

• (1350)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her speech. However, since she spoke after my colleague from Toronto—Danforth, who eloquently expressed his views on the lawfulness of Canada's action in extending its mission into Syria, I was expecting her to address my colleague's concerns in her remarks.

Could she then at least answer the question about the lawfulness of this intervention, which will now extend into Syria, with respect to international law? Can she answer these questions, which are not only on my mind but also on the minds of most of my colleagues in the House and of most Canadians?

[*English*]

**Ms. Lois Brown:** Mr. Speaker, I believe the Minister of Foreign Affairs responded directly to that question. We are working with allies from around the world, some five dozen countries that have put their efforts toward degrading the ISIS threat to the world.

I spoke to the humanitarian initiatives that Canada is taking. We cannot continue to put humanitarian assistance into a place where the lives of the very people who are trying to deliver it are threatened. This brutal group of people, ISIL, have taken the most barbaric

threats to the people of Iraq and Syria. We have seen them use rape as a weapon of war. We see them beheading people before our very eyes.

We have a responsibility to help. Canada will do everything it can.

• (1355)

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's speech with great interest and appreciated her focus on humanitarian matters.

She could not help herself from adding to the long laundry list of graphic visuals about brutality and barbarity, of which the opposition members are very well aware, and agree that ISIL poses a threat to security internationally and in Canada. We also agree that we need to be part of the coalition addressing this ISIL threat.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has released a report today. As we are debating sending our air force to bomb Syria, the government is being warned that the Conservatives have not booked enough money to fund our military over the coming years.

Does the member support asking the men and women in uniform to do increasingly dangerous work with fewer resources? I do not think Canadians want to see that.

**Ms. Lois Brown:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for making reference to the PBO's document. What he indicated in that document was that the greatest cuts to our military came under the 13 years of the Liberal administration.

We have done an enormous amount to catch up. It was the Liberals who sent our military into Afghanistan wearing jungle uniforms, not wearing desert uniforms, making our military a direct target for the opposition in Afghanistan.

We have built our military through skills development and through equipment. We have committed enormous amounts of money to our military. We stand behind the great men and women of our service and we thank them for the tremendous job they are doing every day.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy my colleague from Newmarket—Aurora speaking in the House. She brings her passion and experience, and particularly her work on international development.

One of the most important parts of the Prime Minister's speech in the House earlier this week was showing Canadians that this was not a choice between either Canada working alongside our allies and stopping terror or choosing to do humanitarian assistance and aid.

Canada, from the very beginning of this crisis, has been involved in both. In fact, we have been a leader in providing aid, humanitarian assistance, working with expanding refugee populations. Canada has a proud tradition of being willing to fight alongside our allies on principle, but also, importantly, administering aid and humanitarian assistance alongside that.

Could my colleague elaborate on our leadership in that regard?

*Statements by Members*

**Ms. Lois Brown:** Mr. Speaker, Canada has been the leader. As I said earlier, though, getting humanitarian aid into the most vulnerable places and to the most vulnerable people needs the security that we can offer through our military.

A few examples of some of the things we have generously donated to assist are: 1.5 million people receiving food assistance; 1.26 million people receiving shelter and essential household items, such as hygiene kits, cooking materials, jerry cans and blankets; and 500,000 internationally displaced people and host community children accessing education opportunities.

Canada will continue to work with our allies. We will continue to assess the situation daily.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### CANADIAN BLOOD SERVICES

**Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was proud to partner with Canadian Blood Services to host a blood donor clinic at the Heartland Town Centre in Mississauga.

During a special ceremony, we heard a moving presentation from Vinesha Ramasamy, a courageous young woman who is a cancer survivor and blood recipient. There were tears in so many eyes when Vinesha looked toward those as they were donating blood and personally offered her thanks to them for giving the gift of life. She thanked Debbie, who bravely made her first donation; Ernie, who was giving his 75th donation; and Robert for his 100th blood donation. I also rolled up my sleeve. One must lead by example.

I am proud to say that a total of 33 units of blood were collected on that day, which is estimated to save the lives of 99 patients. I encourage all members of the House and all Canadians who are able to donate blood to give the gift of life.

\* \* \*

• (1400)

### EPILEPSY

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise because it is Purple Day, a day that has been recognized all over the world when we come together to support people living with epilepsy.

More than 300,000 Canadians are living with epilepsy and over 15,000 people learn each year that they have it. It is believed that the number of Canadians living with this disorder is even higher, but due to prejudice and stigma, many people are reluctant to seek treatment.

We must remember to lend our support to people living with epilepsy everyday, in the workplace, in social settings and at home. Let these purple ribbons and our purple clothes be a launching point for discussions, questions, compassion and acceptance.

I would also like to recognize the work of Epilepsy Canada, a non-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness of what epilepsy is and raising funds to support people living with this condition and research into treatment.

I ask the House to join me in encouraging Canadians to learn more about epilepsy to build greater understanding of the challenges faced by people living with it.

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### WORLD THEATRE DAY

**Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today is World Theatre Day and worldwide people are celebrating live theatre in their communities.

Live theatre creates energy and spirit. It is a catalyst for ideas, understanding, creativity and economic development. It helps us look at ourselves and better understand who we are as it explores the meaning and value in our lives.

As the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres messenger Mieko Ouchi says in part:

Drama shows us again and again that we are made up of many selves and wear many different identities...any place that even a single performer and a single audience member can gather, theatre can offer a potent and powerful moment of communion and connection for the performers and viewers watching the same human experience acted out before them. That is what theatre does best.

I wish to congratulate all those who work in theatre, including those at the Thousand Islands Playhouse in Gananoque and at the St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival in Prescott, in my riding of Leeds—Grenville, as they celebrate World Theatre Day.

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### CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my solidarity with a venerable Ottawa—Vanier institution, Congregation Beth Shalom, which has been located in the core of Ottawa, at Chapel and Rideau Streets, for almost 60 years now. It still remains very active, dynamic and open to all ages.

On the occasion of its 50th anniversary, I congratulated the congregation for embracing a vision shared by many of us that Canada is an open, pluralistic and democratic society. Now a decision has been made with a great deal of thought that the *shul* will relocate to the Soloway Jewish Community Centre in the western part of the city.

The Torah is the most sacred text read on a weekly basis. Because the Torah are so sacred, they need to be handled and transported with the utmost of respect. Therefore, the congregation is organizing a relay walk from Chapel Street to Broadview Avenue on Sunday, March 29.

Although I regret its departure, I will have the privilege of walking with the congregation in a spirit of appreciation and respect.

*Statements by Members***HUNTERS AND ANGLERS**

**Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as chair of the Conservative hunting and angling caucus, I have had the honour of meeting with hunting and angling groups from across Canada. Hunters and anglers were Canada's first environmentalists, and that conservation legacy lives on to this day.

I have visited many hunter-supported conservation projects in all regions of Canada, and I am amazed at the dedication and effectiveness of hunting and angling groups in creating conservation projects that deliver real conservation results.

This view was confirmed by a recent Cornell University study that looked at the contributions of hunters to conservation. The study noted:

—hunters were more likely than non-recreationists to enhance land for wildlife, donate to conservation organizations and advocate for wildlife—all actions that significantly impact conservation success.

The study went on to label hunters as “conservation superstars” and concluded that “The more time we spend in nature, the more likely we are to protect it”.

Hunter and angler conservation projects benefit all society through the conservation of biodiversity, improving water quality and enhancing the health of ecosystems.

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● (1405)

**TROUT LAKE YOUTH COUNCIL**

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, recently I had the privilege of meeting with the Trout Lake Youth Council. Led by coordinator Bernie Dionne, the council comprises some 80 students in grades 8 through 12 from Gladstone, Windermere, and Vancouver Technical secondary schools in Vancouver.

These outstanding young people meet every week in Vancouver Kingsway and are dedicated to helping our community. They adopted John Hendry Park and committed to leading a community cleanup once a month. They organized an electronics recycling pickup and doubled what all other city sites combined have done. They volunteered at the community centre's Family Day event, which drew 2,500 parents and children to a full day of activities. They invite speakers on a variety of topics to expand their knowledge and to connect with community leaders.

At a time when Canada needs leadership and citizen engagement, this outstanding group of young people is setting an example for us all. On behalf of the Parliament of Canada, I want to thank the fantastic members of the Trout Lake Youth Council.

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**BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE**

**Mr. Brian Storseth (Westlock—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great honour that on April 11, I will be marching down the main street of St. Paul with the Mallaig Army Cadets in commemoration of the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

As members know, the Battle of Vimy Ridge was significant not only for its military contribution to World War I. This battle marked the first time that all four Canadian divisions, comprising troops from across the country, fought as a cohesive unit. It is this image of national unity and triumph that gives the battle importance to Canadians. The Battle of Vimy Ridge was essentially the event that came to symbolize Canada's coming of age as a nation. For this we honour the men who fought and are eternally grateful to those who lost their lives that April of 1917 in France.

The people of St. Paul dedicate April 11 to remembering the great sacrifice made by those soldiers who fought to end the Great War and bring peace to the world. The Lakeland region has always been proud of Canada's exceptional military past. Our brave soldiers, past, present, and future, are a symbol of the great achievement and sacrifice that defines this great nation.

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**FIRST ROBOTICS CANADA COMPETITION**

**Mrs. Pat Perkins (Whitby—Oshawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the partnership between FIRST Robotics Canada, Durham College, and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology on their successful semi-final robotics competition, which attracted over 47 teams of students from Canada and the United States as well as over 3,000 spectators.

FIRST Canada's partnership with Durham College and UOIT allowed both visiting and local competitors to be inspired and engaged with robotics and technology institutions. The students said that these events helped improve their teamwork skills, self-confidence, and problem-solving abilities.

I would like to especially recognize and thank all the teacher mentors for volunteering their time with each of the elementary and high school student teams. Lastly, I would like to thank Durham College and UOIT for hosting this fantastic event.

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**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-51's provisions are broad and vague, with huge gaps in oversight and accountability. These broad new powers could target, for instance, peaceful anti-pipeline protesters on Burnaby Mountain, citizens in Burnaby and in New Westminster who protest the government agenda, environmentalists and first nations opposing pipeline expansion to the B.C. coast, or aboriginal communities engaged in peaceful civil disobedience to protect their traditional territories.

The government has refused to listen so far to the Canadian Bar Association, the BC Civil Liberties Association, the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, over 100 of Canada's top legal professors, and countless others who have unequivocally exposed Bill C-51's dangerous flaws. New Democrats will relentlessly stand up to this dangerous bill.

Canadians deserve better, and on October 19, they will get better with the new NDP government that respects democratic rights and freedoms in Canada.

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#### SEALING INDUSTRY

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon (Miramichi, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government has always been clear about its support for our Canadian sealers and the sealing industry. Unfortunately, earlier this week, we learned about a woman from Newfoundland and Labrador who recently had her seal skin purse confiscated by U.S. Customs and Border Protection because seals are on the endangered species list in the United States. She is now forced to pay a \$250 fine for trying to take her purse across the border.

The seal hunt is the most humane hunt in the world. Sealing is a proud and historic tradition, one that is part of rural, northern, and Inuit life. It is always a way of life. Our government remains steadfast that the seal harvest is a humane, sustainable, and well-regulated activity. We stand behind the thousands of Canadians in coastal northern communities who depend on the seal harvest to provide a livelihood for their families and recognize the important role sealing plays in the management of aquatic ecosystems.

\* \* \*

• (1410)

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we cannot sacrifice the fundamental freedoms that are central to Canadian society in the name of bolstering public safety. We can and must protect both. The government must listen to the experts who testified before the committee on public safety who warned against Bill C-51 and the overarching attack on fundamental freedoms. The experts agree with the NDP that the bill gives broad and new powers to CSIS, without enhancing oversight, including provisions that could impact legitimate dissent, and does not produce a plan to counter radicalization in Canadian communities.

My main concern is the vague definition of what constitutes a terrorist in the bill. Being born as a Tamil in Sri Lanka, I have experienced what a broad definition of terrorism can mean for an entire people. I have seen and heard from innocent people who have lost everything because of vague definitions of "terrorist".

As a Canadian parliamentarian, I demand oversight and a clear definition of what is a terrorist and what is legitimate protest. I will stand with the NDP to defend our charter of rights for our fundamental freedoms and for what makes us a strong nation.

#### Statements by Members

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the high-tax, high-debt Liberals and NDP will raise taxes on Canadian families to pay for their gigantic spending promises. However, Canadians do not want their money funnelled to bureaucratic black holes. Hard-working Canadian families do not need higher tax bills. What they need is tax relief and direct support they can use as they see fit.

That is exactly what we are delivering. Under our family tax cuts and benefits package, we will put money back in the pockets of parents, something the Liberals and NDP have objected to and have voted against every chance they have had. Under our plan, 100% of families will benefit, with the vast majority of these benefits flowing to low-and middle-income families.

The choice is clear, voting Conservative gets Canadians more money in their pockets to spend on their priorities. Voting for the opposition just gets them higher taxes and more debt.

\* \* \*

#### PURPLE DAY FOR EPILEPSY

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand in this place to help promote awareness of epilepsy by recognizing Purple Day. Thousands of people across Canada will wear purple today as they celebrate our nation's leadership in epilepsy awareness. I thank my colleagues, many of whom are only too familiar with epilepsy, for their generous support and for wearing purple with pride today.

Purple Day was founded by Cassidy Megan, of my riding, to raise international awareness about epilepsy, a condition affecting 300,000 Canadians and 50 million people worldwide. We all owe a debt of thanks to Cassidy for her courage and her commitment to improving the quality of life for people with epilepsy.

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#### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this Conservative government has a strong record of keeping communities safe from dangerous and addictive drugs. This week we passed the respect for communities act, which will guarantee residents, law enforcement, and community leaders a say when drug injection houses want to open. Unfortunately, the Liberals voted against communities having this important say, and the Liberal leader has called for more injection houses to open across the country.

Drug injection houses allow the use of dangerous and addictive drugs that tear families apart, promote criminal behaviour, and destroy lives. The Liberal leader's pledge to blindly open drug injection houses in communities across Canada is both disturbing and wrong.

*Oral Questions*

Our Conservative government will continue to support treatment and recovery programs that work to get addicts off drugs while ensuring that our streets and communities are safe for Canadians and their families.

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**SENIORS**

**Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, every day that the Conservatives fail to produce a budget is another day that they are failing Canadians, especially seniors living in poverty. Introducing a budget is the most basic responsibility of a government, but the Conservatives cannot even manage to do that. Provincial governments are being forced to introduce budgets without any certainty. It is unacceptable and is yet another failure in a decade of Conservative mismanagement.

Canadians are working harder but are falling further behind. Enough is enough. It is time to replace the current Prime Minister, repair the damage he has done, and lift seniors out of poverty. The NDP has a plan to do exactly that. We will return the eligibility age for OAS to 65, increase the GIS to eliminate poverty among seniors, and increase the CPP so that every person can retire in dignity. That is what seniors deserve, and that is what an NDP government will deliver.

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● (1415)

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we know that the high-tax, high-debt Liberals and NDP believe that bigger government and more taxes is what is best for Canadian families. However, on this side of the House, we believe in keeping more money in the pockets of moms and dads. Our low-tax plan is working, and we are making sure that 100% of families with children benefit with almost \$2,000 back in their own pockets.

Now the vast majority of these benefits will go to low- and middle-income Canadians so that they can spend their hard-earned money how they want to. If given a chance, the high-tax Liberals and the high-debt NDP would take those benefits away for pet projects and a larger and growing bureaucracy.

The contrast is simple. Liberals believe that bureaucracy knows best when it comes to Canadian families, while on this side of the House, we believe in giving money back to the real child care experts, and their names are Mom and Dad.

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**ORAL QUESTIONS***[Translation]***CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister chose to ignore our concerns about the war in Iraq and in Syria, at the expense of the humanitarian assistance those countries need.

At a time when refugee claims in Iraq and Syria have reached a record high in 22 years, can the government explain its inaction?

**Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, quite the contrary, the government has been taking action since the beginning of these conflicts in Iraq and Syria. That is why, since 2009, we have resettled more Iraqi refugees than any other country, on a per capita basis. That is why we have also decided to accept 10,000 Syrian refugees who will be welcomed in Canada over the next three years. This government is taking military action to fight the threat posed by the Islamic State as well as measures to address humanitarian and refugee resettlement needs.

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government has just achieved its 2013 objectives. It took two years longer to welcome 1,300 refugees from Syria, without taking into account its promise to welcome 10,000 more refugees in the next three years.

What is the minister's plan to ensure that the government will honour its promises in a timely manner?

**Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP is oblivious to the facts in this matter, just as in many others. From the outset, we achieved our 2013-14 objective, and in January we announced the much more ambitious objective of welcoming 10,000 Syrian refugees over the next three years. That is the most ambitious objective of all the peer countries around the world that are part of the refugee resettlement network. Canada is proud to welcome one in ten refugees resettled each year worldwide.

*[English]*

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives congratulate themselves for being two years late when it comes to fulfilling a promise to bring Syrian refugees to Canada and measures that would save the lives of ISIL's victims are now left on the backburner. Yet the Prime Minister cannot move fast enough when it comes to launching Canada into a war with no exit strategy and no end in sight.

Could that minister explain why the motion of the Conservatives does not include any new money for refugees?

• (1420)

**Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member is completely wrong. Two years ago, we announced our first objective for Syria. We have met and surpassed that objective, and we have announced that 10,000 refugees will be resettled in Canada this year, next year and, if necessary, in 2017. That is the largest commitment to refugee resettlement from Syria by any country yet made publicly. It is in addition to 21,000 Iraqis resettled here. That is on top of asylum seekers who come here in the thousands.

We are taking action against the Islamic State, which is the force creating refugees in Iraq and in Syria. We have to act militarily, in humanitarian terms and also to resettle refugees.

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#### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, according to media reports, yesterday's briefing from the Department of National Defence was clear about how long it saw the mission in Iraq and Syria lasting: years.

The Minister of National Defence has admitted as much, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs has compared the mission to Afghanistan.

Could the government confirm that this one-year extension of the mission is actually only the first step in a much longer engagement? How long do the Conservatives expect the Canadian Armed Forces to be in Iraq and Syria?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the terms of the motion for the government's extension are clear for the next 12 months, based on the RCAF commitment of six fighter jets, two surveillance aircraft, a refueller and sixty-nine special operations forces in a training mission near Erbil. That is the mission we are seeking support for from this place.

To get back to the last question, we just had a visit here from Iraqi refugees, among the 21,000 accepted in Canada. They told us to please ask the opposition parties to support this military program because they wanted their people to be able to go back to their homes in Iraq. They want protection for those minorities. That is what they want.

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of National Defence said that the legal case for dropping bombs in Syria was based on criminality, or Canada's independent right of self-defence, or it was because of the genocide dimension, or perhaps it was article 51 of the UN charter. The Prime Minister said that international law was not really applicable.

Could the Minister of Foreign Affairs tell us what the legal rationale is today, or does he too believe the question is only a joke?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear that members of the NDP are concerned about the legal justification and once they hear it, I take it they do not support the mission. Is that a fair comment? Those are all the questions we are getting.

#### Oral Questions

We have indicated that the government of Iraq has the collective right to self-defence under article 51 of the United Nations. It has officially requested international help, so we will comply with that. We will work on the same basis as our American allies are doing and report that to the United Nations.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### CBC/RADIO-CANADA

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have learned that many more jobs at the CBC are being cut and that this round will affect local stations. Will the minister finally admit that this recurrent downsizing is due to the Conservatives' cuts? Since 2006, they have slashed \$227 million, in 2014 dollars, which is about one-fifth of the CBC's budget.

Will the minister at least try to convince her government to restore that money in the next budget? We hope so.

[English]

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, the CBC is responsible for its own operations. It is up to the CBC to provide programming that Canadians actually want to watch and listen to in both of our official languages.

Our government provides, on a yearly basis, the CBC with very significant funds. Let us be clear that these changes, and the member is probably aware of this, are part of the CBC's restructuring and strategic plan, which it began implementation of in 2014.

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#### THE ECONOMY

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Alberta is the epicentre of the energy downturn and yet Premier Prentice was able to table a budget today on time in this fiscal year. Premier Wall did the same last week in Saskatchewan.

The economists who advise the government say that there is no credible reason for procrastination. Will the Minister of Finance stop playing peekaboo with Canadians and table a budget investing in the real drivers of economic growth: infrastructure, access to higher learning, innovation, effective trade and environmental credibility. Will he do that in this fiscal year?

*Oral Questions*

•(1425)

**Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we know very well that we are in a fragile global economy and of course our country has been impacted by the dramatic fall in oil prices. That is even more reason to stick to our government's plan that has generated almost 1.2 million net new jobs since the end of the recession. It is because of our actions that the overall federal tax burden is at its lowest level in 50 years.

However, the solution is not a tax hike on the middle class like the Liberal leader is proposing and the solution is certainly not a \$20 billion carbon tax that would hurt Canada's economy and kill the jobs of Canadians. Our government has a low-tax plan for jobs and growth for all sectors of the Canadian economy, which is working.

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, decent economic growth is not Canada's reality and despite the government's boasting, it is not doing better than the rest of the world.

Last fall, before the oil downturn, the IMF projected 139 countries would grow faster this year than Canada. In the OECD, there were 16, including Greece. More recently, the OECD has downgraded Canadian growth, while upgrading many others: the U. S., Europe, Japan, Germany, France, India.

Why is the government content to have the worst economic growth record in eight decades?

**Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since forming government, we have had the strongest economic growth record of any country in the G7. We have created almost 1.2 million net new jobs and we have launched the largest federal infrastructure plan in Canada's history.

The G20 summit's action plan singled out Canada for our strong growth. The IMF and OECD both project that Canada will have among the strongest growth in the G7 in the years ahead.

We will not take lessons from the Liberals who think that budgets balance themselves.

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[Translation]

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians have heard from many groups and experts across the country, and they are getting more and more worried about the scope of Bill C-51. The Conservatives are wrong to reject serious criticism of their bill.

That is why the NDP will move a motion to broaden the debate. We want to talk about a counter-radicalization strategy and better oversight mechanisms for intelligence agencies.

Will this government support our motion?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to fighting terrorism, the New Democrats are behind the times. Over two years ago, we implemented our counterterrorism strategy, which the New Democrats did not support.

I would like to thank the committee members, who are doing important work and have listened to dozens of witnesses in recent weeks. They will hear from more this evening.

We have observed tremendous support for a bill that will protect the rights and freedoms of Canadians and will also protect them from the terrorist threat.

**Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if we are talking about the same meetings of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, but as for witnesses supporting Bill C-51, give me a break.

Yesterday in committee, we heard others criticizing Bill C-51 for being too broad in scope and lacking oversight provisions for intelligence agencies. The Canadian Civil Liberties Association was clear: a significant part of Bill C-51 is unconstitutional and would infringe upon our basic rights.

Does the minister realize that this ill-conceived bill will violate Canadians' rights and freedoms?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I hope our NDP friends will listen to the Supreme Court, which finds that our Canadian model, in other words, the review committee, strikes the perfect balance between procedural rights and privacy.

Bill C-51 targets Islamist jihadists to prevent them from achieving their stated objective of carrying out terrorist threats against the west, including Canada.

In this context the measures proposed in Bill C-51 to deal with the nature of threats Canada faces are quite rightly and urgently needed to protect and keep secure the freedom of her citizens.

That was professor Salim Mansur from Western University, in Ontario—

•(1430)

**The Speaker:** Order.

The hon. member for Alfred-Pellan.

**Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about the witnesses who appeared before the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security to oppose Bill C-51.

The Canadian Bar Association criticized the new, almost unlimited powers to disrupt that would be given to CSIS.

The association said:

It is untenable that the infringement of Charter rights is open to debate, in secret proceedings where only the government is represented.

Why is the Conservative government so determined to pass its flawed bill that waters down our fundamental values?

[English]

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the Minister for Public Safety has said numerous times and others who are learned on the bill, they see the legislation for what it is. It is there to protect Canadians. It is there to do so in a balanced way.



*Oral Questions***CANADA REVENUE AGENCY**

With respect to the powers that are vested in judges, the Canadian Bar Association has somehow indicated that this is putting judges in a compromised position. This is what judges do each and every day in a pre-emptive way when they examine warrant applications. This is exactly what judges should be doing in a pre-emptive way.

This is an undertaking judges at the federal court will do that we believe is necessary to enhance the protection of Canadians.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the ministers over there still do not get it. Bill C-51 is chockablock full of measures that threaten Canadians' rights and freedoms, but missing key elements that would actually help keep Canadians safer.

The committee heard today from community leaders, like Zarqa Nawaz, who are working on the ground to prevent radicalization. They desperately need more resources, not divisive rhetoric from the government.

Why is de-radicalization not a priority for the government when we know it works and it can actually prevent future attacks?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have attended a cross cultural round table. However, he should also have listened. I hope he was there when Ms. Raheel Raza, the president of the Muslims Facing Tomorrow, appeared. What did she say at committee? She said that legislation was important to combat radicalization, that we needed better tools to track jihadists who travelled overseas. That is the reality. She does not have a problem with sharing information because the larger picture is that of the security and safety of Canada. Ms. Raza gets it. When will the NDP get it?

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, one of the things the minister forgot to mention she said was that the bill lacked sufficient oversight. He is selectively quoting from his own witness.

Despite the fact that leaders from faith communities have testified at public safety, they all agree that we urgently need a national deradicalization strategy and that Bill C-51 lacks critical oversight mechanisms that would prevent abuse.

How can the minister refuse to act in the face of overwhelming evidence that his bill is fatally flawed, when 45 out of 48 witnesses are telling us that this bill needs to be amended or abandoned?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to know that we will enable the left hand of the right hand government to know what is happening.

I am proud that we will provide the capacity to our intelligence officers to speak to the parent of a young individual who is being radicalized.

We reject the argument that, every time we talk about security, our freedoms are threatened. Canadians understand that their freedom and security go hand in hand. They expect us to do both and to protect both.

There are protections, of course, in that legislation. The fact is that our police are there to protect us against terrorists.

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' spy bill will criminalize environmentalists, but they are not even waiting until the bill is passed. Conservatives have already attacked members of the environmental movement, calling them radicals and foreign threats. Meanwhile, they are just regular Canadians who care about protecting our natural world.

The Conservatives are spending \$13 million on a charity audit witch hunt to silence people who disagree with them. Meanwhile they are cutting CRA auditors and giving out the wrong information to businesses.

When will the minister stop deflecting and call on the Auditor General to look into the mess she has made of CRA?

• (1435)

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, to the Minister of National Revenue and for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is total nonsense.

The member knows very well that CRA audits occur at arm's length. They are conducted free of any political interference or political motivation. The CRA charities directorate acts independently. The rules regarding charities and political activities are long standing; and without question, charities must respect the law.

The only political interference here is the political lobbying by the member opposite.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, that is not true.

The conclusions of the study by the University of Victoria's Environmental Law Centre are clear. The agency is currently conducting 44 investigations into the political activities of environmental groups and anti-poverty organizations such as the David Suzuki Foundation, Canada Without Poverty and Équiterre.

Will the government stop this witch hunt and ask the Auditor General to look into the CRA's activities?

[*English*]

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, to the Minister of National Revenue and for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is nonsense and there is more nonsense.

*Oral Questions*

Let us take a look at what CRA actually does. CRA audits 1% of the charitable sector every year. This means, on average, that only 0.4% of all charities end up having their status revoked, for cause, in a given year.

Let us look at the other facts here. There is \$14.24 billion in tax receipts for charities, and 86,000 charities across the country. Does that member believe that we should not look at any of these charities, or is she just defending the charities of her choice?

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the time for excuses is over.

The Government of Quebec is tabling its budget today, and so is the Government of Alberta. Meanwhile, the Conservatives are continuing to ask Canadians to wait to find out where public funds will be invested.

We need measures now to help seniors who are living in poverty. We need measures now to help families that cannot afford child care.

My question is this: when will the government deliver a budget that makes families and the middle class a priority?

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are keeping a close watch on what is happening in the provinces.

As members know, our government's priority continues to be job creation, long-term prosperity and working in partnership with the provinces.

We will have an excellent budget. The Minister of Finance works on it every day.

[English]

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the news out of Alberta today is that somehow, despite low oil prices, the government managed to actually table a budget, and that is in a province that is much more impacted by low oil prices than here in the federal government.

Here in Ottawa, it seems that the Minister of Finance has enrolled in the witness protection program, and the federal budget is still just a gleam in the Prime Minister's eye. Yet Canadian seniors living in poverty need answers, Canadian parents needing affordable child care need a plan, and the increasing number of Canadians who are out of a job need some hope.

When is the Minister of Finance going to show up and do his job? When are we finally going to see a federal budget?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP names seniors who are on hard times. The only plan by the NDP and Liberals is to raise their taxes.

They talk about parents who are in need of child care. The NDP and Liberals only offer them higher taxes and ending the universal child care benefit that is actually helping parents.

They mentioned Canadians who are out of work. The only plan by the NDP and Liberals is to raise taxes on those who might hire people.

We will not be introducing a budget to raise taxes the way the NDP and Liberals would propose. Instead we will continue our long-standing record of lowering taxes for families and job creators, which has created 1.2 million jobs, and we are just getting started.

[Translation]

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada and the TD Bank have been clear. We are facing the worst job growth in the past 40 years, and the unemployment rate is going to continue to rise.

The Minister of Finance of Canada would rather sit back and watch as Quebec and Alberta table their budgets today instead of tabling his own. The Conservatives are hamstrung and have no plan. They do not have a budget, and they do not have any solutions.

What is the Conservative government waiting for? When will it demonstrate leadership, work with the provinces and finally table a budget in the House?

• (1440)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, taxpayers understand what the leader of the Liberal party does not: the budget is not going to balance itself. Families have to balance their budgets by earning a good salary without punitive taxes.

That is why we cut taxes for families and introduced a child care benefit of almost \$2,000 for each child under the age of six and \$720 for those aged 6 to 17.

The Liberals want to take away all of those benefits. We are not going to let that happen.

[English]

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's economy was weak before falling oil prices, and it has flatlined since. We need a budget now to kick-start the economy and to help Canada's struggling middle class, but the Minister of Finance is saying he cannot do it because of oil prices.

Alberta is far more dependent on oil prices than Canada, yet it is actually delivering a budget today. If Alberta can deliver a budget, why can this Minister of Finance not? Why can he not even tell us the date of a federal budget? Why can he not answer budget questions in the House?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, he has answered the call of Canadians by lowering their taxes and putting more money directly in their pockets. That is why our recent low-tax plan for families will allow parents to split their income to reduce the family tax burden by up to \$2,000. The Liberals want to take that money away and raise taxes. We are giving, through the fall update, \$2,000 per preschooler and \$720 for each child 6 through 17. That is money directly in the pockets of parents, which the Liberals would take away.

Parents understand that budgets do not balance themselves. Conservative low-tax plans do.

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that budgets do not write themselves. They actually require a finance minister who shows up, does his job, writes budgets, responds to questions on budgets in this House, and creates jobs and growth for Canadian families.

TD reports today that precarious employment is worse than it was before the recession. We now have the Bank of Canada, the PBO, CIBC, and TD telling us that Canada's job market is weak.

When will the Conservatives deliver a budget with a plan for jobs and growth? Why can the Minister of Finance not answer budget questions in this House?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since the recession, our economy has created 1.2 million net new jobs, 85% of which are full time, and two-thirds of them are in high-wage industries. After tax and inflation, take-home pay is up by 10%. That is the result of a low-tax plan that encourages hiring and lets the workers who get hired keep more of what they earn.

The Liberals' only plan is to let the budget balance itself and raise taxes on Canadian families. That is why the Canadian people have entrusted us with the responsibility of the economy and that is why we are delivering.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**HEALTH**

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Roy Romanow, the former chair of the Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada, told us that our health care system has reached a turning point.

The Conservatives' inaction is leading us straight towards privatization of the system and an increase in costs. That is in addition to their cuts in transfers to the provinces. Our health care system needs leadership.

When will the Conservatives sit down with the provinces to ensure that our universal health care system is sustainable?

[English]

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I speak to the provinces on an ongoing basis. I have sat down with them twice now in the last two years to talk about the health care

system, and we have a lot of common interest in actually working on the issue of innovation in the health care system.

We already provide from the federal government \$40 billion annually in terms of stable and predictable funding. That is health transfer increases of almost 70%.

A lot of health ministers, including me, are focused on health innovation and finding better ways to make that money work in a more sustainable way and a more cost-effective way.

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the truth is that the government's failure of leadership and lack of vision is putting our cherished public health care system at great peril.

The Conservatives have failed to address important challenges like the high cost of prescription drugs. They have unilaterally slashed funding, and they have taken no steps toward the next generation of health care, like taking action on pharmacare or home care.

When will the Prime Minister sit down with the provinces and territories to work on strengthening our public health care system together?

• (1445)

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I just had a conversation with the Minister of Health from British Columbia, and we talked about the need to work together on a pharmaceutical strategy.

The bottom line is that Canadians pay some of the highest costs for drugs in the world because we are purchasing separately and it is a divide-and-conquer situation.

We are working with the provinces. They are already doing a lot of bulk purchasing, but we would actually like to be at the table. We have started to work with them on that and we think we can save hundreds of millions of dollars, if not billions of dollars, to the system.

\* \* \*

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, both the current and former minister of employment and social development have nothing but praise for the parliamentary secretary for his "important work" in producing a report on employment insurance processing.

People in Atlantic Canada are keen to read this wonderful work, because under the government, they have been struggling with longer and longer wait times to receive their EI benefits.

Unfortunately, the government has not made this work available to Canadians. When will the minister release the report? Will he table it in the House here today?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** As I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, my parliamentary secretary has done great work on behalf of his constituents and all Canadians.

*Oral Questions*

The reality is that the majority of EI claims are now processed within 28 days of making the claim. Two-third are now fully or partially automated. We have increased efficiency in this area by 42% over the last decade. We are also hiring more staff during the peak seasons for employment insurance.

More important, our economy has created 1.2 million net new jobs as a result of our low-tax plan, giving people who are on employment insurance an opportunity to get off and get into a job.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the victims of the massive cuts to the employment insurance system keep piling up.

Numerous studies and people have confirmed that the Conservatives' reform is very harmful to seasonal workers. The current employment insurance system is not adapted to the reality facing business owners and workers in the agricultural, tourism and forestry sectors in Quebec and New Brunswick.

Instead of simply making things harder for employers and seasonal workers, will the minister finally take action to promote economic activity in the regions affected?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the New Democrats keep spreading fear about our reforms. All of their statements and warnings are obviously false. None of that has actually happened. We are trying to create jobs. That is why we have 1.2 million new jobs, 85% of which are full time and two-thirds of which are in well-paid industries. We will continue to lower taxes and increase job opportunities for all Canadians.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**STATUS OF WOMEN**

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, earlier this week the House debated and voted at second reading on Bill S-7, the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act. While our Conservative government is taking a strong stance against harmful barbaric practices, the opposition members fail to stand up and take action.

Could the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration please explain to this House how important this piece of legislation is to protect women and girls in Canada?

**Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul for her excellent work on these issues and on human trafficking. She is a leader.

With Bill S-7, this government is taking action to ensure that no woman or girl in Canada is a victim of early or forced marriage, polygamy or so-called honour-based violence. We are showing zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices because violence against women and girls is always wrong. It is never okay, even when some falsely defend it in the name of tradition or culture.

Sadly, that is exactly what the opposition members have been doing. The New Democrats spoke strongly against this bill in this

House. The Liberals refused to call this violence “barbaric”. They have avoided a recorded—

● (1450)

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Ottawa Centre.

\* \* \*

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, how about some action on murdered and missing aboriginal women?

Mr. Fahmy's passport went missing after it was seized by Egyptian authorities and now his life is in limbo without proper identification. Recently, I brought this to the attention of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and yesterday Egyptian authorities paved the way for the Canadian embassy in Cairo to issue a new passport to Mr. Fahmy. This would allow him to move on with his life.

The question is this. What steps has the Canadian government taken to issue Mr. Fahmy a new passport?

**Hon. Lynne Yelich (Minister of State (Foreign Affairs and Consular), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when Mr. Fahmy is able to travel, we have a travel document ready.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, since he lost access to a passport, Canadian journalist Mohamed Fahmy has been in a very difficult situation, but fortunately the Egyptian courts apparently authorized the Canadian ambassador to issue him a new passport.

Can the minister confirm this information and tell us whether the government will respond positively and quickly to this application for a temporary passport, which would enable Mr. Fahmy to live a normal life before returning to Canada?

[*English*]

**Hon. Lynne Yelich (Minister of State (Foreign Affairs and Consular), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada does continue to call for an immediate and full release of Mr. Fahmy. We also have a travel document ready when Mr. Fahmy is able to travel.

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**FINANCE**

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as the Conference Board has just demonstrated, the Conservative trade strategy for Asia has underperformed, with Canada losing ground to our competitors in investment, services and value-added exports.

*Oral Questions*

Now we are missing another opportunity. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is being launched and will be a major international institution providing access to billions in Asian infrastructure projects.

The deadline to become a founding member is March 31. The U.K., Germany, France and Australia have all joined. Will Canada join too, or will Conservatives miss another key opportunity to engage with Asia?

**Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada continues to assess whether it will become a member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and will make a decision that is in Canada's national interest. We have also been informed that Canada's participation will be welcome at any time.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CBC/RADIO-CANADA**

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we have just heard that the CBC will have to cut another 100 jobs to balance its books. One hundred positions. Eight positions are being cut in Toronto, seven in Sudbury and 11 in Acadia.

[English]

For the CBC, it means 144 positions lost because of the Conservative cuts.

[Translation]

Will the minister stop slashing the CBC and finally reinvest in our public broadcaster?

[English]

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to repeat the answer I gave to this question earlier in question period.

The CBC is responsible for its own operations. It is up to the CBC to provide programming that Canadians actually want to watch and listen to in both English and French. Our government provides the CBC with significant funds on a yearly basis. Let us be clear. As I stated earlier, the fact is that the CBC has put forward its restructuring and strategic plan for the future endeavours that it will partake in. That plan was tabled in 2014. It is now being implemented.

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**MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY**

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday when asked about the government's weak commitment to southern Ontario's manufacturing, the minister flippantly answered with spin. Ontario families who have lost their manufacturing jobs are sick and tired of his spin. They are looking for jobs.

It has been more than two years since Parliament authorized over \$200 million to help rebuild Ontario's struggling manufacturing sector. Can the minister list even five projects that have been funded

by the advanced manufacturing sector specifically or is he just going to give us more spin?

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it was not spin, it was a direct answer to the question. What I described was exactly what the member has asked for, a specific project. It was a robotics project at SickKids hospital that helps kids, which will now be sold around the world.

If the member wants another example, on Monday I was in Burlington, Ontario, at L-3 WESCAM for an investment that will save over 800 jobs in Burlington and expand them into Don Mills. It is creating world-class technology for earth observation on land, at sea and in the air. This is creating jobs all throughout southwest Ontario. Our government invested in it. The Liberal Party voted against it. We will keep ignoring them and keep supporting southwest Ontario.

\* \* \*

● (1455)

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is not just the private sector that is being fed false hope by the government, the public sector is also being dished out some pretty empty rhetoric as well. Let us be clear. It is boasting about a plan that will not fund cities for 10 years, does not build housing today, will not fix a bridge tomorrow and certainly will not solve gridlock anytime soon.

The current government's so-called action plan is actually an inaction plan. This week it is the mayor of Calgary who is pleading with Ottawa to cut out the fake cheques and cut a real cheque to get infrastructure built.

When will the Minister of Finance come out from under his desk, wherever he is, and draw up a budget, fund cities, and get real Canadians working on real projects and real cities now?

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member knows very well from when he was in municipal politics some years ago that there was no support from the federal government, and the Liberals either. There are 26 other members of our caucus who are former municipal politicians. When we talk about municipal politics, we know very well what it is on our side.

We met at 13 meetings across the country to prepare the new building Canada plan with the municipalities, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and all provincial organizations representing municipalities. We are delivering for them and they know it.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**AIR TRANSPORTATION**

**Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on March 16, a plane crashed at the end of the runway at the Neuville aerodrome, 150 metres from an inhabited house. Municipal officials are now asking that the activities at the aerodrome be suspended during the investigation. People are worried. This is the second incident in four months. There is clearly a serious safety problem.

The Minister of Transport promised to meet with the municipal council over a year ago, but she never returned their calls. Will the minister finally keep her promise and meet with Neuville officials to solve the problem at this aerodrome?

[English]

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with respect to air safety in Canada, despite substantial increases in air traffic in general, Canada actually boasts the lowest rate of accidents in the modern era. Transport Canada inspectors and inspectors of the Transportation Safety Board are those who should be contacted with respect to accidents that happen at aerodromes. They do the investigation to tell us what is going on. I know that these incidents are being looked at by officials and we look forward to their reports.

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**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have denied funding for a life-saving airstrip for a remote northern Saskatchewan first nation. Without an air strip that can accommodate an air ambulance, the community of Southend is forced to rely on ground ambulance service. It is a five-hour round trip on a gravel road. The lives of people are at risk and first nations deserve better. Will the minister stop making excuses, come to the table and fund this life-saving airstrip?

**Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member should get her facts right. The airstrip that she is referring to is under provincial jurisdiction. Our government provides a nursing station for that community. The first nation in question currently receives medical emergency evacuation by helicopters or planes.

We will continue to work in partnership with first nations for stronger, healthier and self-sufficient communities.

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**JUSTICE**

**Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians simply cannot understand why the worst of the worst violent offenders would ever be let out of prison. Thankfully, our government is listening. This is in sharp contrast to the opposition parties that promote and support policies like the Liberals' faint hope clause and oppose tougher sentencing regimes for murderers who also commit sexual assault and kidnapping.

Can the Minister of Justice please update the House on our government's actions to protect Canadians?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Wild Rose for his well-articulated question.

In fact, we are the only party in the House that is trusted to get tough on the worst and most violent offenders in this country. I want to commend my predecessor, as well as the Prime Minister and members on this side of the House, who have supported this initiative.

As the Prime Minister said when this bill was introduced, there are certain crimes so repulsive that only lifelong punishment adequately reflects their awful nature. Bill C-53 would ensure that the most heinous violent offenders and the most horrific crimes will receive a life sentence in Canada, and it will mean just that: a sentence for life.

\* \* \*

● (1500)

**INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the crisis in Syria has entered its fifth year, with extensive human suffering. The UN estimates 220,000 have died and more than four million are seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. Today, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees said the conflicts in Syria and Iraq are pushing asylum claims to their highest levels in 22 years.

Next week, the UN Secretary-General will chair a donor conference on the enormous humanitarian needs in the region. Will the minister attend this important conference?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of International Development and Minister for La Francophonie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada will be well represented at the conference, and I must remind the House that Canada is sixth-largest donor country to Syria. In the last six months, especially in Syria, Canada's support has meant that 16 million people have access to safe drinking water, 4.1 million Syrians have access to food assistance, and emergency assistance is provided to nearly three million refugees in neighbouring countries.

We should be proud of this record and we encourage the other countries that have committed to pay what they pledge.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

**Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Davie Canada employs over 1,100 workers at its shipyard in Lévis. Today, Davie has the largest dry dock in Canada and the highest production capacity. The shipyard has hard-working managers and employees. Davie Canada is waiting for an answer from the federal government on a major contract with the Royal Canadian Navy.

*Business of the House*

Can the minister promise to support Quebec's shipbuilding industry and the people of Lévis by finally making a decision?

[English]

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Davie shipyard, in fact, our government already has provided contracts to do important work on the *Louis St. Laurent* and on the *Des Groseilliers* icebreakers. Just recently, we announced another federal contract for the Davie shipyard in terms of extending the life of the Canadian Coast Guard ship, the *Earl Grey*.

Davie is welcome to bid on any and all future government opportunities. There are, indeed, billions of dollars left in the national shipbuilding procurement strategy for which it could qualify.

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**TAXATION**

**Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government knows that there are many costs involved in raising a family and every little bit counts, especially when there are children. That is why our government has cut taxes of all kinds: personal taxes, business taxes, the GST.

Can the Minister of State for Social Development please update the House on what our government is doing to help Canadian families?

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what we are doing to help families is we are actually listening to families. Yesterday I was in Vancouver at the West Side Family Place talking to everyday families about our universal child care benefit expansion and enhancement.

Some moms and dads from a variety of walks of life are having a hard time making ends meet. They are so happy about the expanded benefit. They are happy because it is going to be increased, because every month they count on that cheque. We are going to continue that and we are going to continue to listen to the real experts on child care, raising families, on families' priorities. That is mom and dad.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CONSUMER PROTECTION**

**Mr. Claude Patry (Jonquière—Alma, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the number of credit card purchases is growing, but small businesses are still paying the highest fees in the world with rates ranging from 1.5% to 3%. This is costing many small retailers in my region and Quebec a lot of money.

Will the Minister of Finance use the next budget to regulate these excessive fees at last, as Australia and England have done by setting rates at 0.5% and 0.3%?

[English]

**Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government introduced the debit and credit card code of conduct. Clause 4 says that merchants that accept credit card payments are not obligated to accept debit card payments.

The code promotes fair business practices. Shamefully, the NDP has voted against all of these initiatives to strengthen the code.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

**Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, recently, at the UN's request, the government promised to accept 10,000 more Syrian refugees by 2017.

However, Syria is still not on the list of moratoria countries. That is upsetting to asylum seekers already in Canada who are worried about being deported to a country in crisis.

When will the government put Syria on the list of moratoria countries to protect Syrian refugees already in Canada?

• (1505)

**Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question and for recognizing this government's commitment to resettle 10,000 Syrian refugees in Canada.

We are certainly looking at everything we are doing in Syria and Iraq from a humanitarian perspective. We examine each case closely and encourage all families and social organizations in Canada to sponsor refugees so we can achieve our objectives as soon as possible.

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**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have good news for Canadians. First, it is important to know that there are just a little more than 200 days left in the life of this government. On October 19, Canadians will have the opportunity to put an end to this government. I know that the vast majority of Canadians are fed up with this government.

I have other big news. Even though this government is intolerant when it comes to debates in the House and even though it cut the list of witnesses at the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, it is important to note that Canadians are following the debates of that committee. The majority of Canadians may have approved of Bill C-51 during the initial days of the review in committee, but now the majority of Canadians disagree with this government and this bill. That only goes to show the importance of the House debates, which Canadians are obviously following with great interest.

That being said, I wanted to ask my colleague, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, a question: what is on the government's agenda for the next week?

[English]

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we will continue debating government Motion No. 17, respecting Canada's military contribution to the campaign against the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant. Considering the importance of that debate, we will be continuing it, under an order of the House, until midnight tonight.

### *Government Orders*

ISIL has stated its intention to target Canada and Canadians. In fact, ISIL issued a call to action for people to attack targets in Canada. So far two attackers have responded to that call. That is why we have to take on ISIL, take on the threat it poses and keep it from establishing a geographic foothold from which to operate. We intend to continue to degrade and destroy ISIL.

That is why we are seeking the support of Canadian parliamentarians for our decision to extend and expand Canada's military mission with our allies so we can effectively fight this jihadism which threatens our national security and global security.

We will return to that debate on Monday afternoon and complete it that day.

[*Translation*]

Tomorrow, we will continue—and, hopefully, conclude—the third reading debate on Bill C-26, the Tougher Penalties for Child Predators Act.

Monday, before question period, we will start the second reading debate on Bill C-52, the Safe and Accountable Rail Act. This legislation will improve railway safety and strengthen oversight while protecting taxpayers and making the rail industry more accountable to communities. This debate will continue on Tuesday.

[*English*]

On Wednesday, the House will resume the second reading debate of Bill C-42, the common sense firearms licensing act. The bill meets the government's objective to cut red tape for law-abiding firearms owners and provide safe and simpler firearms policies. Changes to the Criminal Code would enable the government to take steps to ensure the rights of lawful firearms owners would be respected. The debate will continue on Thursday, when we will adjourn for Easter.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### MILITARY CONTRIBUTION AGAINST ISIL

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I notice a number of Conservative members consistently have raised the issue of ISIL in trying to appeal to Canadians about the type of behaviour in which ISIL conducts itself, and has been for years now.

I know this with 100% certainty in the Liberal caucus, but it goes far beyond that, but I think it is safe to say that virtually all Canadians agree that the way ISIL has conducted itself over the last number of years is completely unacceptable. I do not think the dictionary has the words to best describe how its behaviour abhors so many of us. The graphic images of events portrayed by this terrorist organization are very telling why Canada needs to play a role in the fight against ISIL and terrorism.

I would not want anyone who might be listening to feel, in any fashion whatsoever, that the Liberal Party of Canada does not recognize the detrimental role that ISIL plays on the world stage. We

are prepared to take the necessary actions to protect Canadians as a whole.

Terrorism is not new. In fact, if we go back to the 9/11 incident, the falling of the twin towers, we would see that the world responded relatively quickly. At that time, the then prime minister, Jean Chrétien, understood the importance of what Canadians thought and believed a government needed to do.

Different pieces of legislation and different types of discussions took place so Prime Minister Chrétien was able to set at ease the issues of terrorism and safety at home. He underlined for the Liberal Party how important it was to recognize that Canada had a role to play.

The Liberal Party has never opposed the deploying of our armed forces into combat when it clearly serves Canada's national interest. Military missions designed to uphold our interest have transparent objectives and a responsible plan to achieve them.

However, let me be perfectly clear. The Liberal Party does not support the government's efforts to deepen this combat mission and to expand it into Syria.

I have looked at some of the comments put on the record. I would like to go specifically to the other day when the leader of the Liberal Party addressed the House on this very important issue, and the expansion of the mission. Here is what he had to say:

—the government's desire to expand Canada's presence into Syria represents a worrying trend. We can call it evolution or escalation or mission creep. Whatever term is preferred, the pattern is the same.

First we discovered that our role included ground combat operations, despite the Prime Minister's assurances to the contrary. Now we are being asked to expand our involvement into Syria. It is hard to believe the proposed timeline, given the public musings of the ministers of defence and foreign affairs. Indeed, the Minister of Foreign Affairs explicitly compared this war to Afghanistan, stating that we are in this for the longer term. In Afghanistan, the longer term meant a decade.

However, how can we trust a government that so openly misled Canadians? This government is proposing that the Canadian Forces participate in a vague combat mission with no clear end point, and we cannot support that.

● (1510)

That is what the leader of the Liberal Party said just the other day in the House of Commons. It is applicable to the debate we are having today.

ISIL is a threat, and we recognize that. It is important to make it clear how the Liberal Party supports our men and women in the Canadian Forces. I had the privilege of being a member of the regular forces during the 1980s, and what an honour it was to serve Canadians in that capacity.

As parliamentarians, many would argue that our greatest responsibility is when we call upon the members of our forces, those brave men and women, to execute a direction from here in the House of Commons. It is an issue we should not be taking lightly. On that note, I would personally like to send my condolences, prayers, and best wishes to the family and friends of Sergeant Doiron, who was our first casualty in the Iraqi situation we are currently in.



Canada has a clear interest in training Iraqi forces to fight and destroy ISIL. We can and should do this training away from the front lines, as our allies have been doing. Canada should participate in a well-funded and well-planned international humanitarian aid effort. The refugee crisis alone threatens the region's security, overwhelming neighbouring countries. We need to recognize the magnitude of what we are talking about. We are talking about millions.

I would like to reinforce what the Liberal leader stated the other day regarding the United Nations. He said:

The United Nations is telling us that, after four years of all-out war, over 11 million Syrians—over half the population—have been driven from their homes. Syrians are fleeing their country by the millions, and this exodus of refugees is causing a terrible crisis. In five years of combat, over 210,000 Syrians have been killed, including over 10,000 children.

That is a horrendous number. Imagine every resident in western Canada being displaced, and then some. The population of western Canada is less than 11 million. Could members imagine every person in western Canada being displaced? We are talking about a mass displacement of people that is taking place, and the government's response has been found wanting.

Let us talk about the four core principles that the Liberal Party has talked about. First, Canada has a role to play in confronting humanitarian crises in the world. Second, when a government considers deploying its men and women in uniform, there must be a clear mission and a clear role for Canada. Third, the case for deploying our forces must be made openly and transparently, based on clear, reliable, and dispassionately presented facts. Fourth, Canada's role must reflect the broad scope of Canadian capabilities and how we best can help.

• (1515)

This is the test we have put to the Prime Minister, the Minister of National Defence, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the current government has failed to meet that test. Canadians need to be aware of the Conservatives' inability to present their case.

• (1520)

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend from Winnipeg for his intervention. He talked about his time in the Canadian Armed Forces. We have done work here on the Hill together for veterans and on military-related issues, and I always appreciate his thoughts on these matters.

One thing I have to raise is that he outlined his leader's list of considerations, and what I find striking, because the member went back to the 1980s, when he served, was that he said we should bring a clear and transparent debate to this House of Commons on a military combat deployment. However, that very approach was not followed by the Liberals before there were 12 years of Afghanistan. In fact, the Kabul and later the Kandahar missions were not brought to this House.

I am going to be speaking later this afternoon and using some speeches other Liberal leaders have given. We cannot find a speech from former Prime Minister Chrétien or others in the House of Commons before Afghanistan, because they did not bring it to the House for a debate and a vote.

### *Government Orders*

Our Prime Minister is taking a radically different approach. This is the second time we are having this debate into the evening. We are voting in this House on a combat-related deployment, a modest one but an important one. Why is the Liberal Party not supporting a mission that is clearly and transparently laid out, unlike the Liberals' Afghanistan mission?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, that is just not true. It is not the case.

Let me be very clear. The government is proposing an unfocused, unending combat mission for the Canadian Armed Forces. The Conservatives have failed to clearly articulate the mission objectives, with the Prime Minister and his Minister of National Defence offering conflicting arguments.

Let us reflect on the debates and discussions that took place both inside and outside the House on Canada's role in Iraq. It took a great deal of courage for then Prime Minister Chrétien to recognize that it was not okay for Canada to play a role in Iraq back then. There was a case made and put forward in regard to Afghanistan.

I believe that the Liberal Party has taken a very responsible approach to dealing with our Canadian Forces and world politics. We can be very proud of the way we have dealt with foreign affairs. This is something I personally take great pride in. However, it is very important that Canadians be aware of just how much—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I will have to stop the hon. member there to allow for another question.

The hon. member for Sherbrooke.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I wonder if my colleague can help us understand the vague objective of Canada's mission in Iraq, which the government is now trying to demonstrate. There seems to be no clearly defined objective for the end of the mission in Iraq.

The problem is that the government has decided to undertake a combat mission without having a clearly defined objective at the outset about when the mission will end and when we will be able to withdraw our soldiers from all of these conflicts.

Can my colleague comment on the problem of not identifying a clear end to this mission?

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, that is the essence of what I believe many Canadians are quite concerned about. It is that there has not been a clear game plan put on the table. There has been a lack of transparency from the Prime Minister's Office, which we should all be concerned about.

What I would like to do is bring home a few points on what the Liberal Party of Canada is actually saying. Canada has a clear interest in training Iraqi forces to fight and destroy ISIL. We can and should do this training away from the front lines, as our allies have been doing.

*Government Orders*

Canada should participate in a well-funded and well-planned international humanitarian aid effort. The refugee crisis alone threatens the region's security and is overwhelming neighbouring countries. Here at home we should expand our refugee targets and give more victims of war the opportunity to start a new life here in Canada. There are many things we can do. We will have to wait and see how the debate continues.

• (1525)

**Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for welcoming me back from the little break I took.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to discuss the continued crisis caused by the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, known as ISIL, which is an ongoing crisis and a critical international issue.

I want to add a personal dimension to this debate.

I grew up in multicultural countries such as Tanzania and India before I arrived in Canada. In Tanzania, my best friend, whom I treated as a family member, was a Sunni Muslim. His name is Shakot Malik. In India, close friendships developed during my school years with members of the Muslim community. Here in Canada, members of the Sunni, Shia, Ismaili, and Ahmadiyya have all been strong supporters and personal friends. Let me name a few: Naseem Mahadi, Albert Elkadri, Ray Sarout, Nagah Hage, Moe Amery, Moe Suliman, Jamal Rafai, Mohammad Rasheed, and Mohamad Yasin.

Why do I say these names? It is because they are outstanding members of the Muslim community who have strongly contributed to making Canada the best country in the world.

There are a few others I can also name, such as Dr. Habiba Chakir, a leading scientist, and Nazreen Ali, with whom I held a symposium a few years ago here on Parliament Hill called "Women in Islam". I will also soon have one as a family member too.

We are proud of the contributions made by these great Canadians.

I have also had the privilege to represent Canada abroad and have made strong friendships with Muslims from across the globe. They are all outstanding citizens of the world.

Therefore, it is wrong to say that ISIL represents Islam. ISIL is a bunch of murderers. What its members are doing is definitely against Islam. They kill the innocent, they rape women, and they target minorities. Terrible stories have come out of Syria and Iraq where ISIL is in control. Let me say how barbaric they are. They even kill their own who disagree with them. *The Economist* magazine, in a recent issue, captured what members of ISIL are doing. They are spreading fear.

The international community has not only an obligation but a responsibility to stop the murderous rampage of these barbaric individuals who take pride in killing.

Over 60 countries have come together to stop these atrocities being committed where ISIL has a presence. Why? It is because we

all believe that we not only have an obligation but a responsibility toward the innocent victims of ISIL.

May I remind the House that it was Canada that spearheaded the discussion at the United Nations on the "responsibility to protect" following the Rwanda genocide. It proposed that when a state fails to protect its people, either through a lack of ability or a lack of willingness, the responsibility shifts to the broader international community.

ISIL has already arrived on the shores of Canada. I have talked to Christianne Boudreau, whose son Damian Clairmont died in Syria. We have lost two soldiers here in Canada because of individuals brainwashed by ISIL propaganda.

Our security service continues to disrupt those who choose to target Canadians. We have to stop them.

Their headquarters are in Syria, where they hide, because they know that they will not be attacked. Well, we have said many times that Assad must go. That remains our position. Assad must go, but ISIL must not find shelter in Syria. Hence, this resolution authorizing extending the mission on ISIL in Syria, before it becomes a global threat, is essential.

I will remind members that ISIL is already present in Libya, Nigeria, and Yemen. Recently we heard that ISIL is targeting American soldiers in the United States by naming them.

I fail to understand the logic of the opposition parties that fail to see the threat. Recently the Liberal candidate in Calgary Forest Lawn said that we should not be in Iraq. We should not be fighting ISIL. This was from a police officer who spent his entire career helping innocent victims. Why is he blind to helping innocent victims of a terrorist organization? Even Pope Francis has said that ISIL must be stopped.

However, ISIL members must also face justice. They must be held accountable, otherwise they will give rise to more terrorist groups, creating more havoc for peaceful societies around the globe.

• (1530)

As my friend Goldy Hyder said, "Why should we remain idle when there are those who are trying to destroy everything that we believe—everything that we love?"

Canada will not stand idle. I am very proud when I go to the Remembrance Day parade held in my riding where people stand with pride for how they fought for democracy, how they fought for human rights, how they fought to ensure countries remain free. These are people who gave their lives.

Contrary to what the NDP and the Liberals are saying, this is the same party that without debate sent Canadian soldiers into Afghanistan because they felt it was the right thing to do. They did not even bring the debate to the House, as this government is doing so that they can talk. As far as the NDP is concerned, we know from the debates we had on Afghanistan that the NDP would oppose anything. They even opposed World War II, when the whole world was fighting evil.

*Government Orders*

This government, contrary to what the NDP is going to say and contrary to what the Liberal members are going to say, is going to stand for the long Canadian tradition of helping the innocent around the world.

When peace is threatened around the world, Canada will be there. Canada is going there. I am very proud to support this resolution.

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have to suggest that it is no wonder that Canadians do not trust what they hear from members opposite. When they get excited about certain ideological things or they want to raise people's passion, they lose their connection with the truth and with reality. When the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs talks about the NDP's support for World War II, he was not here and neither was I, but I have read the record, and the motion in relation to World War II was supported by the NDP.

I criticize the member and the Minister of National Defence when they state publicly that the NDP does not support and never supported any military intervention, because he was here. Both of them were here when the two motions on Libya, the initial one and the first extension, were supported by the NDP. We got off board when the mission went off board and changed its mandate entirely to regime change. We saw the result of that.

**Hon. Deepak Obhrai:** Mr. Speaker, I was here too when we debated Afghanistan and when New Democrats opposed everything about defending Afghanistan. When they say that they have supported something like Libya, sometimes when they see public opinion has changed, they will change their position, but very soon they go back to their original position and stop supporting any of the missions.

New Democrats keep saying humanitarian aid. Yes, that is a very important component, but that is after what has happened. We have to stop the root cause of these refugees. As the Minister of National Defence said during question period, Syrians are saying they would like to go back home. They want to stay home. Let us now help them stay home. That should be the goal, and that can only be done if we fight the terrorist groups back there.

• (1535)

**Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I say to my hon. colleague opposite that public opinion is how you make decisions, but it is not necessarily how we make decisions. We make decisions in the best interests of Canadians for the long haul.

I would say to the government members opposite that what you are proposing in the motion has been unfocused. We have seen that from the beginning. We have seen an unending combat mission for the Canadian Armed Forces with no exit strategy being proposed by your government.

In addition to that, why did the government opposite feel it is important to extend this mission into Syria right now when all of the other countries, with the exception of the United States, have not done that and have refused to do that? Why is your government not prepared to provide more aid for refugees, more humanitarian efforts for the people of Syria, for the children and the many families that need it right now?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Before I call on the parliamentary secretary, I have just a reminder in reference to using the “you” or “your” word. Try to direct commentary or questions through the Chair and to use the third person. That works out pretty well.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Hon. Deepak Obhrai:** Mr. Speaker, let me remind the hon. member that our government has brought the debate into the House. When the Liberals were in power, they did not bring the debate to the House when they sent troops to Afghanistan. They made their own decision, so for them to say that they did the right thing is wrong.

Why are we going into Syria? It is because ISIL is in Syria. Their headquarters are in Syria. They run their murderous organization from there. It is therefore necessary to go and fight in Syria, where they are, so that we stop them. I have said before that Assad must go. We are not supporting Assad, but we need to stop ISIL, and ISIL is in Syria.

As for what this mission is, it is very clear in the motion. It is for one year. The objectives are there. Everything is there. They were briefed, as well as the opposition critic, so I do not understand what the whole problem is that they keep bringing up.

**Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, welcome back. I am glad you are looking better.

I just heard the hon. member mention Afghanistan. Of course, the Liberals did not come to the House for that, and they did not have an exit strategy or say at the time what their exit strategy was. We were there for quite a long time.

We did agree with it because it was an honourable and appropriate mission. I think the hon. member mentioned that in his response. I wonder if he feels, as I do, that it is rather juvenile and naive to expect that one would have an exit strategy when one is beginning to win.

We are winning in Iraq. They are getting supplied by Syria—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order, please. We have just a short bit of time to get another quick response in. The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Hon. Deepak Obhrai:** Mr. Speaker, we do have an exit strategy. The exit strategy is when we defeat ISIL. That is the exit strategy.

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first let me commend my colleague, the member for Ottawa Centre and the official opposition foreign affairs critic, on a clear and forceful speech this morning outlining the NDP's position on the motion before the House on the government's intention to expand the combat mission in Iraq to Syria and nominally add another year to the mission. I also want to commend my other colleagues who have spoken in the debate thus far.

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I also want to acknowledge the appalling and abhorrent abuses and atrocities committed in Iraq and elsewhere by this vicious group known variously as ISIS, ISIL, or Daesh. These include mass killings, sexual violence, slavery, forced displacement, and the destruction of holy and historic sites. In Iraq alone, the violence has led to the displacement of 2.5 million civilians and left 5.2 million in need of humanitarian assistance.

ISIL claims an old goal of parts of Islam, one that was even promoted in the Middle East by the west for its own purposes 100 years ago, which is the establishment of a caliphate. Its methods are brutal and are opposed by the rest of Islam. ISIL is fomenting and carrying out a most extreme battle between the Shi'ite and Shia branches of Islam, extreme intolerance to the point of death, and a radical ideology that in no way represents Islam.

The current crisis has been created by ISIL in the vacuum of governmental authority in Iraq after 10 years of military intervention by the United States and others. In response, the current international coalition of some 60 nations, led by the United States, is now working to deal with the threat of ISIL and the fallout of its actions. The coalition has undertaken the so-called “five lines of effort”, of which only one involves military combat. What is more, only a small minority of coalition partners are actually engaged in military combat. Canada is one of them.

The government started last September with a 30-day mission to advise and assist the Kurdish peshmerga in northern Iraq. Then it became a six-month air combat mission with the assurances of no ground combat, no painting targets, and no accompaniment of the Kurds into combat. Now the government is nominally adding another year to Canada's commitment and expanding into Syria without its consent, a condition set by the Prime Minister last fall.

I continue to say “nominally add another year” for a very good reason, which is that the Conservative government, through statements by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of National Defence, and the Prime Minister himself, has made it clear that it is headed toward a long-term military combat mission for Canada with no clear end. We will be faced with this decision as long as the Conservatives are in government.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of National Defence, and the Prime Minister have all stated that ISIL poses a direct threat to Canada. The Prime Minister said:

We will deal with it as long as it is there. We will not stop dealing with it before that.

Hearing that, we know we are in this for the long haul.

We have to look at how the government has defined the threat. The Minister of Foreign Affairs said in his speech this morning that Canadians are under siege. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of National Defence, and the Prime Minister have repeatedly said that ISIL has declared war on Canada. The Minister of National Defence actually invoked Canada's independent right of self-defence in international law as a justification for the actions being taken by Canada.

These overblown statements by the most senior leaders of the Canadian government risk the credibility of Canada in the international world and the credibility of the government at home.

They are clearly designed to raise the level of fear among Canadian citizens. What kind of respect and reputation in foreign affairs can Canada expect with this kind of leadership on the most serious matter of state—going to war in foreign countries?

We do know, of course, that terrorists exist in Canada. That is not new, but neither the attacker on Parliament Hill nor the one in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu was sent here by any foreign entity.

● (1540)

As pointed out in one of Canada's foremost national newspapers, *TheGlobe and Mail*, despite attempts by the Prime Minister to closely tie ISIL to the terrorist threat in Canada, the actual connections are thin to non-existent.

Instead of dealing with the actual threat in Canada by engaging in robust and well-resourced anti-radicalization and counter-radicalization programs here at home, by working with the Muslim community instead of alienating them, by preventing the flow of funds to ISIL, by confronting the dire humanitarian situation in a significant and increased manner, and by doing all of those things that my colleague the member for Ottawa Centre emphasized in his speech this morning and that are contained in the NDP amendment, the current government is going down the road of war from mission creep to mission leap with no clear goals, no honesty with the House of Commons and the Canadian people, no clear end or exit strategy, dubious legal justification and no end gain.

In a television appearance the other day the Minister of National Defence stated that the strategy has gone from one of containing ISIL to defeating it. We just heard the same thing from the parliamentary secretary. The Minister of Foreign Affairs said something else today. However, when the Minister of National Defence was asked what happens in the event that Canada reaches the objective of defeating ISIL, he admitted that he would need to look for a crystal ball. That will give members some idea about where the government thinks this is going and how it would lead to the actual resolve it is proposing. The objectives keep changing depending on who is speaking, and without a clear objective the uncertainty about this mission and its length is obvious.

We cannot trust what the government will do in the course of this military action. We found that out over the last six months as the mission “evolved” without Canadians knowing about it at the time, and evolved contrary to the express promises of the Prime Minister.

This time he has given us a hint. On Tuesday in the House the Prime Minister said, “We have made important deployments...those deployments could easily be changed”. He also opened the door to further expansion, saying, “we must avoid, if we can, taking on ground combat responsibilities in this region. We seek to have the Iraqis do this themselves”. With the government's record, that is far from reassuring.

*Government Orders*

Have we learned nothing from our experience most recently in Afghanistan and Libya? Neither can be called a success. In Libya it was relatively easy to destroy the Government of Libya, although that was not the stated intention going in, which has changed from the “responsibility to protect” to “regime change”. The result was a disaster of instability, chaos and a vacuum into which numerous terrorist groups, including al Qaeda and ISIL are now free to operate. Now we are dealing with the fallout from a 10-year military intervention in Iraq. When will we acknowledge the limitations and significant potential for failure and disaster by taking this military approach again and again?

Let me be clear. The NDP supports the coalition, as do 60 other nations, with only a handful of our western allies engaged in air strikes, and none engaged as Canada is on the ground. This debate is about what role Canada should play as part of the coalition. Canada must act, but we must do so in the way we can best add value to the international coalition, and in a way that respects international law and our values as a country. We cannot support the long-term, ill-defined, military combat mission proposed in the motion. We have therefore amended it to conform to the important steps that Canada can and should take, both within Canada and in the region, to support those affected and to help build the long-term stability of Iraq and the entire region.

● (1545)

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I believe the member's statement was filled with a number of mischaracterizations of the government's policy. I strongly disagree with his conclusions.

First, the member characterized a small number of countries as being involved in the military campaign. In fact, there are 24 countries that have committed military assets to the campaign, amongst which are the social democratic governments of Denmark, Belgium, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and France. As well, other countries with military assets including involvement in the air campaign whose governments' decisions are supported by the social democratic parties are the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, and the democratic administration in the United States.

Parties of the centre left all through the democratic world see an urgent security imperative and humanitarian imperative to stop this genocide, to stop the metastasization of this genocidal terrorist organization into actually becoming something resembling a state. Why does the NDP take such a radical departure from the mainstream view on international security of the centre left parties?

Second, the member says we have no clear goal. The goal is very clear. It is to degrade ISIL to the point where it no longer constitutes a security threat to Canada or the world. That is what I characterize as defeating that organization.

The member says there is no exit strategy. We have 600 personnel in Kuwait and 69 in Erbil. The exit strategy is very simple. When the Government of Canada decides that their mission is over, they get on planes and return home.

Would the member please stop repeating this nonsense.

● (1550)

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Mr. Speaker, I find it amusing that the minister likes to play with words. About the exit strategy, there is a well-known strategic matter that militaries should and can and do consider whenever they are engaged in battle. When they go into a mission, deciding how to get out is a very important part of deciding whether to go in.

As to the goal, the goal is expressed differently today. We heard from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, then we heard from the parliamentary secretary. We do not know what goal the government has.

We do not trust the government, frankly. I do not know what the other parties in other countries do with their governments, but we certainly have reason not to trust the government as to what they will do, when they will do and how far they go.

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my fellow defence critic a question of his party's position.

First, I will say that our position is not to support this motion because we do not see it being in the national interest. The Liberal Party of Canada has never shied away from sending the Canadian Armed Forces into combat when it does serve the national interest.

We received a briefing yesterday. In that briefing, foreign affairs was very clear that it is important that Iraq's own army become sufficient to take on ISIL on its own. What it said is that it is becoming stronger thanks to advise and assist, and training efforts by coalition partners, including Canada.

We agree that these efforts should be behind the wire and not at the front lines. Why would the NDP not support behind the wire, back of the front line training that could help make the Iraqi forces stronger so that they themselves can protect their people and territory, and take it back from ISIL?

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that we have never objected to the notion of assisting the Iraqi army to train and transport weapons to the Iraqi army, which was done from the Czech Republic and from Albania. We supported that. That was never put to a motion in this House.

What was put to a motion in this House in early October was the whole package, which we voted against. We did have trouble, of course, getting the truth from the government during the month of September, even as to how many people were going and how many people were there. When questions were asked as to when they were going, the response was “What do you want? The air schedule? The flight numbers?” Those were the kinds of responses we got. It took about three weeks to find out how many were going.

We would certainly support efforts to assist the Iraqi army. What we ended up getting was a combat mission with combat involvement by those ground troops.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Before we resume debate, I have a comment.

*Government Orders*

With the nature and the gravity of the debate before the House today, members may have observed that we are only really getting about two questions during the five minutes allowed for questions and comments. This is something the chair occupants have been watching closely.

We will do our best to fit more questions in, but it is quite understandable that members, and those responding to the questions, want to take their time to speak on the kinds of points that are pertinent to the question that is before the House this afternoon and this evening, I understand.

With your co-operation and indulgence, we will do our best to accommodate as many as we can, but I do not expect we will get more than probably two questions or comments in during that five minute period.

Resuming debate, the hon. Minister of Veterans Affairs.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, whenever we talk about the deployment of the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces into a combat or combat-related mission, it is one of the most important debates we have in the House. Certainly as someone who served in the military, I take very seriously my chance to speak in the House of Commons.

I was proud to speak on October 7 of last year on the mission against ISIL, when the Prime Minister first brought it to the House. Now I speak in a unique role as well, as Minister of Veterans Affairs, recognizing that when we send our men and women into areas of the world like this, there are risks. I think of those risks and of those people, the moms and dads who are serving their country, the sons and daughters, people like Sgt. Andrew Doiron and his comrades who in their training mission encountered friendly fire. It just shows the risks and uncertainty when we send the Canadian Armed Forces in. We send them because they are professional and among the best in the world. As Minister of Veterans Affairs, I am not just proud of them, but I am here to assure those men and women and their families that we will serve them after their deployments and after they leave uniform.

I think back to October 7 and look back at my speech to see where we have come as a country, as one of the allies fighting the ISIL movement worldwide, and what has happened since October 7. I read the Prime Minister's speech to the House. It is important because we are bringing this debate and a vote to the House, unlike the Liberal Party before the 12-year Afghanistan mission. The Prime Minister said in October of last year, "It has never been the Canadian way to do only the most easy and praiseworthy of actions and to leave the tough things" to other nations.

Our country has had a proud history of playing a role commensurate with our size and ability. That is what we have been asked to do here alongside our allies like the United States and others, and that is what we are doing with professionalism.

Let us look at the world and indeed Canada since the first debate in the House in October of last year. We are now renewing the mission because we have taken very concrete timelines that were monitoring the impact of our mission to degrade and restrain ISIL from its advance and to halt its activities of barbarism in that part of the world.

What have we seen since October? We have seen attacks in the Middle East, terrorism attacks in Africa, Europe, and here in Canada. We have seen the rise of the foreign fighter phenomenon. Last year there were estimates of 20,000 foreign fighters joining the ISIL mission in that part of the world, 500 or more from Great Britain and Germany and more than 1,000 from France. There have been Canadians. We have been troubled by the fact that there are Canadians who have been misled and swept into this global jihadi movement, who are actually travelling there to commit these atrocious acts. That gives us a further responsibility as a leading nation of the world to not ignore what is happening.

There has also been progress. Sgt. Doiron and the CSOR, our F-18 squadrons, our Aurora crews, our Polaris crews, Canada, and our allies are making a profound impact. Religious minorities have been protected. There are refugees leaving these areas where their lives are at risk. We have degraded ISIL and we have constrained it out of large parts of Iraq, which it was essentially overrunning last year.

However, there is still progress to make. There are still inherent risks with allowing a terrorist force that has as its mission to create a state and execute and encourage attacks throughout the world. Canada is not immune. We have seen that in this city. Therefore, we have a responsibility to play an active role.

I am proud when the Prime Minister also highlights our leadership on the humanitarian aid side of the mission, because the subject of refugees and aid cannot be divorced from the fact that we need to bring security and safety to that region. Just this week in the House, the Prime Minister said, "We do not...choose between fighting... [terror] and helping its victims. We will continue to do both". We are providing some of our world-class expertise from the Canadian Armed Forces, but we are also one of the lead nations in aid. We are one of the lead nations responding in the refugee crisis. We will continue to do that.

● (1555)

In my speech on October 7, I said debates like this define the very character of Canada.

[*Translation*]

The fact that we have the opportunity to have this debate is part of our Canadian values, values that we must defend.

[*English*]

A debate like this calls for a Churchill quote, because he was a leader to whom many parliamentarians from around the world look. Churchill, in debates like this, would say let us worry less about action but worry more about inaction. That is paraphrasing Winston Churchill. Our government is taking deliberate and measured action against not just a threat in that region but a threat to the world and to stability.

*Government Orders*

It is measured in that we are back debating a timeline of this deployment. We are also in a limited combat role where our fighter aircraft can degrade and pin down ISIL. We are doing a training mission to help the Iraqis and the peshmerga defend their own territory, to give them the tactical knowledge to help them defend against the atrocities. It is a limited, measured, and temporal mission that we are bringing to our Parliament to debate.

One of the most troubling parts of the debate in October and, indeed, this week is the sad position of the Liberal Party of Canada. In fact, it is a deviation from that party's traditional approach to Canada's position in world affairs, and it is troubling. In my speech last October, I quoted Mackenzie King from 1939 in this place, who thanked Conservative leader Robert Manion, a Vimy Ridge veteran, for taking the politics out of the debate about World War II. King said, "This deep-lying instinct for freedom is, I believe, characteristic of the citizens of Canada from one end of this great country to the other". That was said by Mackenzie King in this place, thanking the opposition for supporting Canadian involvement against tyranny.

What did Lester Pearson, another leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, say in 1951 in the era of Canada in Germany as part of the Cold War and the Korean mission? Pearson said, "We should accept without any reservation, the view that the Canadian who fires his rifle in Korea or on the Elbe is defending his home as surely as if he were firing it on his own soil". These are not foreign acts that we can ignore. Indeed, Canadian security is inherent in what is happening across the world.

Even in 2001, the foreign affairs minister and deputy prime minister for the Liberal government, John Manley, said in that very foyer, after 9/11:

Canada has a good reputation...in the world, but let's make no mistake about it: Canada does not have a history as a pacifist or a neutralist country.

Canada has soldiers who are buried all over Europe because we fought in defence of liberty...

Those are three quotes from three generations of Liberal leaders in Canada. What will historians look back on as the current Liberal leader's profound quote in defence of liberty? Would it be that this is not about whipping out our CF-18s to show how big they are? It is sad. The Liberal Party has disappeared from what most Canadians knew that proud party to be. Even its defence critic today criticized what she called the laundry list of atrocities being conducted by ISIL that we are trotting out. This is what we are fighting. Canada does not let a laundry list like that be read and say that it is not our mission, that we have no role there.

We are a proud country that benefits from globalization, that benefits from trade, that gives aid and helps on a humanitarian basis around the world, and we are doing that, but we also do not shirk our responsibility to play a role that is commensurate with our size and ability. I am very proud of the men and women of the Royal Canadian Air Force. I am very proud of all uniformed figures in the operations centres working with our allies. I am very proud of our soldiers from JTF2 and the CSOR units who are giving the tools to some of the people on the ground to prevent these atrocities.

● (1600)

Canada has a role to play. Our party, our government, is bringing this to the House of Commons to show Canada that this is an

important role. I truly hope that those members in the Liberal Party remind their leader of his responsibility in that regard.

● (1605)

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Northwest Territories, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have an opportunity to stand and ask my colleague a question.

At the end, he spoke very strongly about how he sees that Canada has a role to play. Canada could have many roles to play. This is a role that the Conservative Party has chosen to play in this conflict.

My understanding is that the conflict in Syria and Iraq is moving into the urban centres. We are going to be playing a role in which our airplanes, without guidance from allied sources, are going to be bombing urban centres. That is going to lead to civilian casualties. That is the role Canada is taking on with this conflict right now. This is a role that I do not think is appropriate for Canada right now. Canada can do much better in the field of humanitarian efforts.

How does my colleague feel about the situation that is going to occur when Canadian airplanes are causing civilian casualties throughout that region?

**Hon. Erin O'Toole:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Northwest Territories for that question and remind him of what I quoted from the Prime Minister's two speeches in the House on this mission, just this week, in which he said that we will do both. We will not only try to contain and destroy a terrible force that is causing risk to Canada and to that region, but we are also going to help the victims affected by ISIL. This is not an either/or debate. We are doing as much on a humanitarian level as a leading nation, both giving and assisting, as we are playing a critical role in the security debate.

I would note that in my remarks I mentioned the Royal Canadian Air Force and its Aurora observation aircraft and the Polaris refuelling our CF-18s. We have the most modern and well-trained air force in the world. In conducting an air mission like this to contain and destroy ISIL and to cut off its supply line, we analyze every mission. Nothing goes if there are risks of collateral damage to civilians. Only an air force of our professionalism can do that, in which its members can actually assess targets and then learn from each strike.

The sincere hope, as the Minister of National Defence said, is that once we degrade and destroy it to that point, our exit strategy is called a flight plan back to Canada.

*Government Orders*

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was quite surprised that in that laundry list of examples of past prime ministers, the minister left out former prime minister Jean Chrétien and his decision not to take Canada into the war in Iraq in 2003. The member's own leader, the current Prime Minister, strongly supported going into that war, with arguments based on the very provocative kind of rhetoric, and not reason, that is being used in the talking points from the Conservative members today. That war proved to be disastrous and the ground for the very chaos and terrorism that is happening in that country today.

When I hear from the member about his experience in the armed forces, I wonder what he would do if he had leaders who were doing what the two ministers are doing, where one is saying that the goal is to degrade ISIL and the other that it is to destroy and eliminate ISIL. These are two very different objectives. How would that member have responded to having very different objectives from leaders when he was in the armed forces? Would it not have given him concern that perhaps it would not have been in his interest to follow those very conflicting and fuzzy directions?

**Hon. Erin O'Toole:** Mr. Speaker, I am quite shocked that the Liberal defence critic accuses me of using talking points here today. My talking points were actually how previous Liberal leaders talked. I quoted three generations of leaders of the once-proud Liberal Party: MacKenzie King, Lester Pearson and John Manley, who was Jean Chrétien's deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs. They knew Canada had a role to play in the world. In fact, Mr. Manley became the *Time* magazine newsmaker of the world essentially for that remark he made, showing that Canada would respond. We responded by going into Afghanistan to stop the gathering threat that was being perpetrated through the Taliban, allowing terrorists to train in that country.

What is interesting, that might not be in her talking points, is that Jean Chrétien did not bring that to a debate here or vote in the House of Commons. He used his executive power to deploy Canada for what ended up being a 12-year mission.

The stark difference between the talking points, which were really the speeches of past and current Liberal leaders, shows the decline and shows how the Liberal Party is out of touch with Canadians.

• (1610)

**Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government is formally today seeking from all of us in this place our support for extending and expanding Canada's military mission against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, commonly known as ISIL. With this motion the government is asking that we agree to continue to put men and women of Canada's armed forces in harm's way in Iraq and over, if not in, Syria.

That harm may find them is most obvious now in the wake of the recent and tragic death of Sergeant Doiron. May he rest in peace and may those who knew him and loved him find solace in some way. May his life and his fate be at the forefront of our minds as we consider this motion. Not just Sergeant Doiron's life, but let us also think about the 158 Canadians who died in service to this country in our war in Afghanistan, about the thousands who were injured, about the thousands more who will wrestle forever with post-traumatic

stress disorder and about those who could not live any longer with the experience or memory of their service in Afghanistan and took their own lives.

This is the inevitability of war. This is what the Conservative government is asking us to accept with this motion. This debate then is about our responsibility for their lives, the lives of the men and women of our armed forces. Sometimes circumstances warrant our approval of military action. History, including our own Canadian history of military action, tells us that sometimes circumstances warrant that we say yes, knowing that those who go into military action on behalf of this country may not come back whole, if at all.

It follows that a few important requirements need to be met before "yes" can be the answer, before support for military action can be forthcoming. The first and most fundamental of these is trust. Trust in the government, trust that the government will abide by the language of the motion before us, trust that it will hold sacred the consent and the limits to that consent as set out in the motion before us given to it by the House.

We know the answer to this question. It has been provided to us many times over in many ways, but we need not reach any further than this mission before us. The House has been misled and the consent provided by the House for the mission to date has been abused. On September 4, the Prime Minister announced the deployment of several dozen military advisers for up to 30 days to help the Kurds in Iraq. We were told that this was an advise and assist mission.

On September 30, the Prime Minister told us in the House that Canadian soldiers are not accompanying the Iraqi forces into combat. Over and over again in so many different ways, the Prime Minister has been asked in the House about the role of Canadian ground troops in Iraq, about the engagement of Canadian ground troops in combat. Over and over again in the House, we were told that they would not be so engaged. By February it became clear. The answers provided by the government, by the Prime Minister himself, were not true.

Canadian soldiers providing ground support to air strikes exchanged fire with ISIL ground units. At least three such firefights were reported between the end of January and mid-February. Now we are being asked to approve a motion that "notes that the Government continues not to deploy troops in a ground combat role". We know that not to be true. The government knows that not to be true. We have had ministers rise in the House to acknowledge the engagement of Canadian soldiers in ground combat. We have had the death of Sergeant Doiron to confirm this truth for us.



*Government Orders*

What it betrays is a government that is not just untrustworthy, but takes far too lightly its responsibilities, a government that falls far short of its responsibility to deal with this matter with the seriousness it deserves. It is not merely just about planting this strange clause about combat troops in the motion, the issue extends to the reference in the motion to UN Security Council resolution 2178. Its reference suggests that the resolution is somehow in support of this mission, that the United Nations Security Council resolution somehow confers support for this mission or legitimizes it. Resolution 2178 deals with the issue of the travel of terrorists and the financing of terrorism.

• (1615)

Moreover, on the matter of the conduct of the current government to date, and the proposed extension and expansion of this mission, it is difficult to read into the resolution anything other than contradiction to the motion in which it is embedded.

It recognizes, for instance, "...that international cooperation and any measures taken by Member States to prevent and combat terrorism must comply fully with the Charter of the United Nations". It reaffirms respect for "the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all States in accordance with the Charter". It further reaffirms that:

Member States must ensure that any measures taken to counter terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law, and international humanitarian law, underscoring that respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law are complementary and mutually reinforcing with effective counter-terrorism measures, and are an essential part of a successful counter-terrorism effort and notes the importance of respect for the rule of law so as to effectively prevent and combat terrorism, and noting that failure to comply with these and other international obligations, including under the Charter of the United Nations, is one of the factors contributing to increased radicalization and fosters a sense of impunity...

We have asked the Prime Minister and ministers of the Conservative government whether they have in fact complied with their legal obligations under international law. In response to that question from the leader of the official opposition, a question that arises straight from the text of the Security Council resolution embedded in their motion, the Prime Minister saw fit to crack on wise about ISIL lawyers. He said:

I am not sure what point the leader of the NDP is ultimately making. If he is suggesting that there is any significant legal risk of lawyers from ISIL taking the Government of Canada to court and winning, the Government of Canada's view is that the chances of that are negligible.

While he sends our Canadian Armed Forces around the world to stand up for the rule of law, while he cites in this motion the Security Council resolution reaffirming it, we have a Prime Minister who flouts the rule of law, who openly mocks it in our Parliament.

I have one final point about the text of the resolution as it relates to the motion. It tells us not only that compliance with international legal obligations is mandatory, but it explains why. It is the view of the Security Council, as reflected in this resolution, that compliance with international law complements and reinforces effective counter-terrorism measures, and that the converse is also true, that the failure to comply with international obligations, including under the charter of the United Nations is "...one of the factors contributing to increased radicalization and fosters a sense of impunity".

It is perhaps an obvious point that has not escaped the attention of so many analysts of these circumstances that it is in the context of tearing down state institutions and tearing asunder civil society that we provide fertile ground for radicalization. Surely we have witnessed this enough times that not hundreds of thousands of troops on the ground much less bombs from on high is the prescription for peaceful development and security.

Canada must respond differently from now on. We must accordingly say no to this main motion and support the motion as amended by the NDP.

**Mr. Bernard Trottier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for La Francophonie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the speech, and I know that the hon. member's intentions are perhaps good.

The member talked about the legal case, as if the other 59 or 60 countries that are participating in this mission to combat ISIL have no legal case. It is a very important consideration. Many countries, by the way, are participating in the initiative against ISIL in Syria also. Those countries have legal standing.

We have explained our position with respect to legal standing: article 51 of the UN charter. We will be notifying the UN as per article 51.

More importantly, and I think members of our party phrased it today, if the legal case is made, will that party then support this mission?

I think everybody agrees that there is a humanitarian disaster. There is a military imperative on the ground in order to be able to save people from the brutality being put in place by ISIL.

• (1620)

**Mr. Matthew Kellway:** Mr. Speaker, we are virtually alone among all those coalition countries in expanding this mission into Syria. It is only the United States that has assumed aerial bombardment of Syria, and we are alone as the only country that has committed ground troops to combat as part of this mission.

I think what the member misses is the very fundamental point here, which is our ability to trust the government, our ability to trust that this government takes its responsibility for the lives of Canadian Armed Forces men and women sufficiently seriously. It is the very fact that this government holds great disregard for the rule of international law, as reflected in the comments of the Prime Minister in this House. That disregard for international law, as reflected in the fact that the government has not taken the necessary steps required under the UN charter to get legal approval for this mission, is what informs our position, in part at least, on the mission that the government is proposing to undertake.

**Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Liberals really believe that we have a role in the campaign against ISIL, and we feel that the role should be in the best interests of the people of Canada. However, we also feel that the government has not articulated its objectives, and Liberals cannot support a mission that could very well result in Assad consolidating his grip on Syria. As we know, Mr. Assad has oppressed and terrorized the people of Syria, and we have to do everything we can to ensure that does not continue.

*Government Orders*

I ask my colleague if New Democrats support this view that has been taken by the Liberal Party of Canada.

**Mr. Matthew Kellway:** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, it is not clear what the Liberal position is on this matter.

Resolution 2178, which I cited, talks about the complementary measures of respect for law, for human rights, for freedoms, et cetera, and effective counterterrorism measures, yet we have the Liberal Party standing up in support of Bill C-51 before that bill is even tabled and remaining on their feet in support of that bill while knowing that it robs Canadians of rights and freedoms and fundamental human rights.

The Liberal position on the broader issue of counterterrorism, on the broader issue of the public safety of Canadians, and on this issue of the expanded mission in Syria is perfectly unclear to me and, I think, to the majority of Canadians.

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, an editorial in *The Globe and Mail* yesterday said:

But the logic behind the...government's Syrian plan has gaps, inconsistencies and blind spots.

I would like my colleague to comment on that.

**Mr. Matthew Kellway:** Mr. Speaker, that is a very modest criticism of this mission. We have seen over and over again in this area of the world that responses from western countries in the form of military action, even to the extent of well over 100,000 troops on the ground in certain countries, do not reap the goals that we hope for the rest of humanity, which is the ability to live in peace and security and fulfill our potential here in this world.

To suggest that there is a blind spot here is a very modest conclusion. There is no end game that the Conservatives have in mind. They talk about “defeating” and “eliminating”. They use all sorts of words to characterize what they hope to do in the end against a counterterrorism movement that currently occupies territory the size of the United Kingdom in Syria and Iraq and through associative groups has spread through other continents.

We hear today from the Minister of National Defence that the end game is that we will leave when we have had enough, and that is more than a blind spot to this mission. That tells us that we really do not have a mission.

• (1625)

**Hon. Lynne Yelich (Minister of State (Foreign Affairs and Consular), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is deeply concerned by the recent increase in violence in Iraq and its humanitarian consequences. Canada condemns, in the strongest terms, the targeting of civilians and religious minorities, and we are deeply concerned by reports of possible war crimes and crimes against humanity. I would like to provide some context that would help members understand the dire situation being faced by the victims of ISIL.

The humanitarian situation in Iraq and neighbouring countries continues to deteriorate as armed clashes drive displacement. Since January 2014, more than 2.4 million people have been displaced throughout the country, representing one of the largest cases of displacement in the world. Basic services, including health care and water infrastructure, have been disrupted, resulting in acute humanitarian needs. Intense fighting in ISIL-held areas has resulted

in a security situation that does not allow humanitarian organizations to operate, and the persecution of minority groups is an ongoing concern.

A key challenge for the humanitarian community continues to be the difficulty of being able to get into conflict areas in order to reach the people who need their help. The military measures we are taking do not preclude humanitarian actions also being taken. There is no either/or. In fact, security on the ground is essential. It is essential to providing humanitarian assistance, and degrading the capabilities of ISIL is key to achieving this while assisting those most in need.

Canada is the fifth-largest donor country in the humanitarian response to the crisis in Iraq. In the last six months, in Iraq we have helped feed 1.7 million people. We provided shelter and relief supplies to 1.25 million people and helped with education needs for half a million children.

Since the beginning of the crisis, Canada has committed \$67.4 million to experienced humanitarian partners, such as United Nations humanitarian agencies, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, and non-governmental organizations, to get life-saving assistance to those who need it most. Canada is providing food, hygiene kits, cooking materials, blankets, tents, medical supplies, and other essential supplies, as well as making emergency repairs to water and sanitation facilities.

The religious persecution of those seeking to practise their faith in a peaceful and secure way is unacceptable to Canada, and we are supporting efforts to assist in the protection of these rights. Our assistance is also supporting organizations that are responding to incidents of sexual and gender-based violence.

In addition, we have provided \$9.5 million to respond to the needs of Syrian refugees in Iraq. Last October the former minister of foreign affairs announced an additional \$10 million contribution to support the innocent victims of ISIL's brutality, in particular to respond to the heinous acts of sexual violence and human rights abuses being committed against women and children.

We have deployed humanitarian relief supplies to Erbil from our stockpile located in the International Humanitarian City in Dubai. These supplies included kitchen sets, jerry cans, tents, blankets, hygiene kits, and mosquito nets. These supplies, distributed by Save the Children and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in partnership with Iraqi organizations, are providing much-needed relief.

The size and pace of displacement have overwhelmed local communities and governments in the region. We know the suffering is spilling across borders. That is why Canada has been a leader among the international community in our response to the broad crisis in the region.

*Government Orders*

In Syria, Canada is the sixth-largest country donor in the humanitarian response to the Syrian crisis. Canada has made significant contributions in response to the Syrian crisis, including more than \$700 million in humanitarian, development, and security assistance for Syria and neighbouring countries.

Our government has committed additional humanitarian assistance for the needs of Syrians within the country and for those seeking refuge in neighbouring countries, and we support UNICEF's "no lost generation" strategy.

● (1630)

This is to provide education and protection for conflict-affected children. With this funding, UNICEF in Syria provided 162,000 children with school material and reached 20,000 children with critical support.

In Jordan, UNICEF provided for 52,000 children and youth to attend child- and adolescent-friendly spaces and reached 36,980 women and men with awareness sessions on prevention and response to violence, on protection, and on referral, as well as on sexual and gender-based violence.

Canada has committed over \$230 million in development assistance to countries hosting numbers of Syrian refugees, including Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon. This assistance focuses on building resilience in refugee-hosting communities to provide basic services such as education, municipal services, water, and sanitation. The assistance is also to foster social cohesion.

In Egypt, Canada is supporting 195,000 Egyptian and Syrian refugee students through school feeding, and over 60,000 students through initiatives supporting access to quality education.

In Jordan, over one million Jordanian and Syrian refugee students are benefiting from improved access to quality education, water, sanitation, and hygiene initiatives. Canada is supporting the provision of municipal services to more than 1.1 million Jordanian and Syrian refugees.

In Lebanon, Canada is providing water, sanitation, and hygiene support in schools to 18,750 Lebanese and Syrian refugee students.

Thanks to Canada's support, our partners are responding to numerous humanitarian needs. They are providing drinking water to 16 million people, as well as food assistance to 1.4 million Syrians inside the country and emergency assistance to nearly three million refugees in neighbouring countries.

As mentioned, there has been a concern that children will fall behind with their education because of disruptions caused by conflict and displacement. We are addressing the protection and education needs of displaced children, who are being denied the right to a childhood, an education, and even a future. Canada is taking steps to address this issue across the region.

We will continue to work closely with our partners to ensure that humanitarian assistance is provided to those affected by the barbaric group ISIL. Canadian officials will continue to monitor the situation closely and assess the security and humanitarian challenges that are facing the Iraqi people.

It is very concerning that both the Liberals and NDP fail to acknowledge the real threat that ISIL and jihadi terrorism pose to Canada. Under the leadership of our Prime Minister, our government will continue to take this threat very seriously. ISIL has made it clear that it targets, by name, Canada and Canadians. We cannot protect Canada by simply choosing to ignore this threat.

We cannot provide humanitarian assistance to victims of ISIL in other countries by ignoring the threat. We will not sit on the sidelines, as our opposition, the Liberals and the NDP, would have us do.

I will be supporting today's motion because it is clear that Canada must help. We must help to confront ISIL. We must help to degrade ISIL. We must help to confront and degrade ISIL until it is no longer a threat to Canada.

● (1635)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

I would like to pick up on a question that a lot of Canadians are asking and that many MPs have asked, because it is hard to get an answer. At what point will the government be able to say that the mission has been accomplished?

We have heard several definitions of "mission accomplished" from various ministers. Some say that it is about degrading the resources and capabilities of these groups; others say that it is about defeating or completely annihilating them.

Can the member tell us at what point the Conservative government will be able to say that the mission has been accomplished and whether it is even realistically possible to permanently annihilate terrorist groups like the one we are talking about today?

[*English*]

**Hon. Lynne Yelich:** Mr. Speaker, as long as ISIL has a safe haven in Syria and that continues, which is why we made the decision to join our allies to attack ISIL in Syria, and as long as Syria is not resistant, we will be expanding our mission.

To speak about the end is very difficult when the mission has not been passed in the House.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the minister made reference to the Liberals and the New Democrats not recognizing the threat that ISIL posed. I will not speak for the New Democrats, but the Liberal Party recognizes the terrorist threat that ISIL poses and its barbaric behaviour. We believe there are ways that we can deal with this.

It is interesting that the former minister of Veterans Affairs went to great lengths to applaud former Liberal prime ministers on the wonderful approach they had in dealing with war and getting Canada engaged. What the former minister of Veterans Affairs did not acknowledge was former Liberal prime minister Jean Chrétien and his decision that Canada not be engaged in Iraq.

*Government Orders*

Especially when we look at the lack of transparency with the Prime Minister on this important issue, it does not mean that in all circumstances the Liberals have to support what the government proposes.

With hindsight, does the member believe her government would have supported Canada going to war against Iraq back in 2003?

**Hon. Lynne Yelich:** Mr. Speaker, in hindsight, I look back to October 22, 2014, when we had a clear threat. Our threat was ISIL, and Canada was at war with ISIL and the jihadists. I think back to how the military and the men and women in uniform were targets from then on. From that day on, ISIL's target was anyone wearing a uniform in Canada, on our soil.

That is what I think back to, and that is why we have to do what we have to do.

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the last New Democratic MP to enter the debate characterized my remarks as having being that “we would leave when we had enough”. I would like the minister to comment on that. I do not know if she heard my speech, but that is a complete fabrication. I said no such thing. I said that we had a very clear mission, which neither opposition party seemed to want to hear.

Does the minister not agree with me that our clear objective is to degrade ISIL to a point where it no longer constitutes a threat to Canadian or international security? Does she not agree that this is the clear objective?

Would she not also agree that the government has been extraordinarily transparent here at the second debate on a second motion, with weekly technical briefings for the public and the media, and briefings offered to the opposition? In fact, I do not think any Canadian government has ever been more transparent about a military operation.

● (1640)

**Hon. Lynne Yelich:** Mr. Speaker, I could not have said it better myself. I do agree. Yes, the international jihadist movement has declared war on Canada. That is clear. As I said, I think back to the recent months. There is nothing to compare with what our country went through on those days and the threats around the world.

We have no doubt that it is an important part of our work to do what we can to stop ISIL.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasung, Rail Transportation.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Sherbrooke.

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the House for the opportunity to speak to the very important motion we are debating today. I am pleased to be addressing parliamentarians on behalf of the people of Sherbrooke, who have afforded me the privilege of being here today.

This is a very important motion. As parliamentarians, one of the most important decisions we must make is to deploy the men and women in uniform who defend Canada on our behalf. This is clearly the most important decision that we are asked to make.

Therefore, it is with a great sense of responsibility and duty that I will make this decision. I will try to state my position as clearly as possible, a position that I share with many of my colleagues who have already spoken on this subject.

I would like to go back to the beginning of the Canadian mission in Iraq, which the government now wants to expand into Syria. In the beginning, the mission proposed by the government was to last 30 days. It simply consisted of advising the Iraqi and Kurdish soldiers.

However, when those 30 days had passed, the government made a request to extend the mission by six months. Six months ago, we also debated a motion about this mission in Iraq. Today, the government is asking us to vote on extending that mission for another year. We went from 30 days to six months to a year, and each time, we had to ask dozens of questions to try to get clear and consistent answers from the government.

People like me who watch question period every day noticed that the government kept contradicting itself. For example, some ministers were saying two different things about whether we would accompany or assist Iraqi troops. Contradictory answers were given about whether or not our soldiers would be engaging in combat and whether or not they would be near the front lines. How can the government say that our soldiers are far from the front lines when they were only 200 metres away?

In that respect, an unfortunate incident occurred not that long ago. One of our soldiers lost his life for his country. I want to express my sincere condolences to his entire family and to thank them. This soldier gave his life for our country. He was 200 metres from the front lines, when the government told us that our troops were two kilometres away from Islamic State positions. Two kilometres may seem like a lot but it really is not in situations such as this. Unlike the Americans, who did not get that close to the front, our government allowed Canadian soldiers to get only 200 metres away. That also shows that the government is not giving us clear answers about what our soldiers are doing. Just in the past few days, we heard new contradictory remarks.

This time, they had to do with the purpose of the mission. Will the government say that the mission has been accomplished when the Islamic State's capacities have been degraded, when the group has been eliminated completely or when it has been stopped in its tracks? The government has been describing the goal of the mission in several different ways.

*Government Orders*

● (1645)

Sometimes their descriptions were even contradictory. Has the government earned our trust? That is the question I asked myself when I was assessing the motion and deciding how to vote. Can we trust the government, based on the seven months that have passed since the start of Canada's mission? The answer is no. As the leader of the official opposition clearly demonstrated on Tuesday, any trust we might have had in this government going forward was broken as a result of its contradictory statements and unclear information.

I will not vote in favour of the main motion today for several reasons. As I just said, I cannot trust the government going forward. In addition, there is a lot missing from this motion. As military experts have said, there are two things we are supposed to have when deciding to engage in a mission: a clear and specific objective, and a planned exit strategy. We cannot simply get on a plane and leave, as the government is implying. It is more complicated than that. Military strategies are more complicated than getting on a plane and leaving. It is rather rich to hear Conservative ministers say that it is as simple as that.

Thus, there are these two things: establishing whether there is a clear objective and whether there is a clear and well-defined end to this mission. The answer is obviously no. That much is obvious.

Earlier I mentioned that there are several definitions for the end of the mission. Some ministers spoke about degradation and others about annihilation. The ultimate objective of the mission is not clear. When will the government say that Canada has done its part, that the mission has been accomplished and that we are withdrawing? It is not clear. We cannot support a mission that, in our view, does not have a defined objective and is still unclear. In this case, the objective is vague to say the least.

We are supposed to learn from our past mistakes. When we make a mistake, we try not to repeat it. However, if we look at the outcome of George W. Bush's war, which began in 2003, the results are mixed. After many years in Iraq, the results of the U.S. government's efforts in that conflict are uncertain.

The situation we are in today might, to a certain extent, be a result of that conflict, which created a situation and internal conflicts in that country. Perhaps the impact of those conflicts is being felt today. The resulting situations are certainly not pleasant for the civilians in those countries.

The Conservative Prime Minister supported the war back then; he was in the opposition. We might ask ourselves whether the mission being proposed reflects the Prime Minister's desire to go back to his 2003 position, which was to wage war. We could say that this is the Prime Minister's war and it has no legal basis. This will be my last point, since I do not have a lot of time left.

Today, we are talking about the motion to expand the war into Syria. I will not repeat the entire argument made so well by my colleague from Toronto—Danforth, but the legal basis is questionable and unfounded. We are having a hard time getting answers from the government on this legal basis. If the government wants to move forward, it will have to prove that there is a legal basis in international law.

● (1650)

Without that, I cannot support the one-year extension of the mission in Iraq.

**Mr. Bernard Trottier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for La Francophonie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to the remarks by my colleague across the way.

Canada and Canadians around the world have been targeted by ISIL fighters, but Canada is not the only country that has been threatened. Many other countries that guard the rights and freedoms of their people, such as Denmark, Australia, France and the United Kingdom, have been the target of attacks, attacks that are still happening because too many young people have been seduced by ISIL's barbaric message. We all agree that we need to end this situation.

The NDP says that we should do nothing and that Canada should not get involved in fighting this extremism. My colleague talked about strategy and ways to get out of this situation. However, before we can get out of it, we have to get involved.

How would the NDP go about fighting ISIL's barbaric fundamentalist Islamic forces? I must repeat that some 60 countries around the world are involved in this fight.

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I agree that we need to confront this problem. Where we disagree, however, is on the role Canada should play. We should determine that role by looking at what resolutions international organizations like the UN have adopted. The United Nations Security Council has adopted three resolutions on Iraq, and none of them authorizes military action.

The United Nations Security Council is calling for action to prevent the influx of foreign fighters and the funding of terrorist organizations, including ISIL. Putting pressure on governments in the region to prevent cash transfers to ISIL is a real diplomatic effort that Canada can and should prioritize. That would be effective. These UN resolutions give Canada a mandate and a role to play.

We need to combat the rise of extremism and terrorism, both inside and outside our borders, by taking action against radicalization. However, I am not hearing anything about that from the other side of the House.

[*English*]

**Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the people of Guelph who I talked to several months ago were of mixed feelings about our engagement in Iraq, some for and some against. However, I have talked to them recently and they are concerned. They are concerned because of the extension for an entire one year. A lot can happen in one year. They are also concerned because we are now going into Syria.

*Government Orders*

We know the government is prone to exaggeration and sometimes misinformation. It told us we would not be on the ground at the front line. In fact, we have had a death on the ground at the front line in Iraq. Then there is the more recent exaggeration about Canada and the United States possessing smart bombs. We know that is not true. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have them.

Does the member opposite have some concerns, as do the people of Guelph, about now going into Syria and this becoming far more than anyone has planned for and given the evolution or the mission creep that has already existed, whether it is likely to continue even further?

• (1655)

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault:** Mr. Speaker, I certainly share the concerns of the people of Guelph.

Going into Syria poses a number of problems with respect to international law. To say that a group that poses a threat to Canada is a good reason to bomb another country, even though that group is not even a recognized state, creates a dangerous precedent, so the people of Guelph have every reason to be concerned.

**Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to present what I hope are some new perspectives on this very important debate. We are talking about Canada's mission against the Islamic State in order to combat terrorism, which we all know is a threat to Canada.

It is a threat not only far from our borders, for civilians living in the Middle East and other regions of the world, but also within our Canadian borders and in our communities, where these networks and individuals who have been radicalized to believe in this harmful ideology are present. Luckily they are very few in number in Canada.

[English]

I would like to begin by reflecting, as we often do in this place, on the historic context.

A hundred years ago, in March of 1915, the men of the 1st Canadian Division were already in France, at the front line. They were waiting to move from France into Belgium where they phased into the Ypres salient and faced their first major action at St. Julien later in April. That battle, as we recall, included the first use of chlorine gas.

In 1940, it was election day, 75 years ago. Prime Minister Mackenzie King was re-elected with the support, however, of a Conservative leader and Conservative Party under Manion. It called itself a national government because it believed in the importance of what Canada was doing and obviously Canada was already at war. It had declared war, forces were deployed, pilots were in the air and we were facing a major threat. It was one we hoped would remain unprecedented and one that led to the peace of 1945 and the institutions, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It has maintained order on our shores and in much of the world since that time.

These were fights against forces of disorder, in the context of world wars, in order to bring about a stronger order. In one case it led to the League of Nations, which lasted barely a couple of decades, and is not seen as a terribly successful exercise in the management of international affairs. Then there was the United Nations and the UN charter, with the support of NATO, the Bretton Woods organizations and all of the trading relationships, the WTO as it is called today. It made the international system much more successful today than it was in 1945 and much more a home for peace, order and good government, for freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law than we ever dared to hope in 1945.

We have only to turn on our television sets or tune in to the Internet media stream to see that this order is under threat in many parts of the world, from Boko Haram in Nigeria, from the Taliban, still, in Afghanistan, from Putin in Ukraine. However, the scale of the conflict in Iraq and Syria today is without precedent in the world today. The scale of the threat from terrorists to both regimes in Iraq and Syria is without parallel in the annals of terrorists, which itself is a hideous litany of atrocities and conflicts in which Canada has been involved, on the larger scale in Afghanistan, but elsewhere in the world.

In Syria, of course, a vulnerable population faces a double threat because even before terrorism became the hydra headed monster it is today in both countries, its own president, Bashar al-Assad, was repressing the population and inflicting excruciating casualties, which now number well over 200,000 deaths. Many of the deaths were inflicted by the government of Syria.

• (1700)

We have a situation where terrorism and terrorists have been both a threat and part of a larger proxy war involving regional powers, jockeying for position. Iran and Russia obviously want to prop up Syria. Others have unfortunately lent their support in the early stages to groups associated with al Qaeda, to groups that now call themselves the Islamic State. The result is a massive humanitarian crisis, the likes of which this world has not seen since at least Rwanda, the genocide there and the ensuing crisis in the Great Lakes and in eastern Congo, but perhaps a crisis without parallel since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which led to one of the largest exoduses of humanity ever recorded.

In Iraq and Syria, we see Sunni and Shia being victims, especially when they are in minority positions on the territory of the other, on the territory of their armed enemies. We see Alawites and Ismailis suffering, having to protect themselves, vulnerable. We see Kurds and Jews being slaughtered in indiscriminately.

These are only the cases where it is documented. There are very few journalists in Syria. It is increasingly difficult for journalists to cover what is happening in Iraq unless the ISIL media make a video and post it on YouTube. We know that the atrocities are on a much larger scale than we have even recorded so far.

*Government Orders*

Whether it is Assyrian Chaldeans, Chaldeans, Mandeans, Cyrillic Orthodox, Circassians, Turkmen, Armenians, Yazidis or Shabaks, Kizilbashs, humanity and all the populations of these countries are under threat of indiscriminate violence, and hundreds of thousands of them have lost their lives. The diversity of civilization left by all three Abrahamic faiths in these countries over millennia is under threat. That threat—we know from documented sources that no member of the House is going to challenge—includes a threat to those who would help these minorities, like the United States and our European allies, but explicitly including Canada. That threat needs to be addressed.

The opposition response is to sit on the sidelines and watch the slaughter continue. That is what we are hearing, both from the Liberal Party and the NDP, and it is unacceptable to us and unacceptable to most Canadians. Even in the face of this scale of challenge, the other parties in this place choose to do nothing. The NDP is opposed in principle to military. The Liberals are opposed by stealth and ambiguity, ignoring the principles they articulated earlier in the 20th century, the responsibility to protect which they said would protect vulnerable populations. Now they are honouring in the breach more than the observance.

Our response is military. Our response is humanitarian. Our response is generous. However, it also includes the resettlement of refugees. Let us remind ourselves that this response by Canadians, by private sponsors and by our government has been extremely generous and on a large scale, thanks to the great work of my colleague, the Minister of National Defence, when he occupied this portfolio.

Since 2009, Canada has resettled 21,000 Iraqis, more per capita than other country outside of the region, unheralded by the opposition, unacknowledged most of the time by those on the other side. We are well beyond the commitment we made to Syria and are on our way to resettling 10,000 Syrians. That is the largest publicly announced commitment to refugee resettlement, not to accepting asylum seekers or to accepting people across the borders, because we do not have borders with these countries. It is the largest commitment to resettling refugees from a long way away by any country. In addition, we will continue to work to resettle 5,000 refugees from Turkey, Syrians, Iraqis, Iranians who have been there for a long time, and we will accommodate 3,000 more Iraqi refugees this year.

We are defending Canada's values in doing this. We are defending the international order, both by supporting Iraqi forces and by opening our doors and our hearts to those who need and deserve protection.

• (1705)

We have no illusions on this side about terrorism. We have no illusions about the kind of protection victims of terrorism need, and that has to include the kind of response the House is preparing to endorse with this motion: a humanitarian response, a refugee response, and a military response.

**Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. colleague whether he has any concerns at all that the Minister of National Defence is going out there and usurping the role of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and making

completely erroneous claims about the state of international law. The Minister of National Defence said yesterday:

I would further state that Canada has an independent right of self-defence here insofar as this organization has explicitly targeted Canada.

The idea that threats from a terrorist group give us the right to use military force in another country is a completely erroneous and ridiculous statement of the state of international law. I am wondering, as someone who comes from the foreign affairs field, whether my colleague has any concerns at all that we are looking at a kind of reverse takeover by the Minister of National Defence of an area the foreign affairs department should be leading on.

**Hon. Chris Alexander:** Mr. Speaker, what we are witnessing is a takeover of the opposition by some of the most eccentric, unsound thinking that has ever been pronounced in a western democracy on an issue as important as this.

The United States, Canada, and others went to war against al Qaeda in Afghanistan under the authority of the right to self-defence, as guaranteed and formalized by the UN charter. The government of Iraq, our partner in this venture, is under attack by a terrorist organization that wants to take over that country.

Terrorism, if the hon. member would take the trouble to read the dozens of resolutions on this score, is illegal. Terrorists are subject to international forms of punishment as well as to some of the most hard-edged national forms of punishment, and rightly so.

There is no legal question in other democracies, even among socialists, about the authority for undertaking this military operation, including its combat aspects, including aerial bombardment of ISIL. Why do other socialists get it but not the NDP?

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of the minister's speech, I was hopeful that a speaker was finally going to bring forth some thoughtful ideas on this situation in Iraq and the choices facing us and actually discuss the issues on the ground and the options. However, sadly, it was not long before he was trotting out the same sad clichés and the myth that opposition members either agree with the government's efforts to deepen this combat mission and expand it into Syria, with unclear objectives and no exit plan, or do nothing. Nothing could be further from the truth, as Liberals have laid out in their remarks today.

The Liberal Party is for doing a number of things and is for being part of the coalition against ISIL. It is specifically talking about the need for more trainers to work with Iraqi troops to prepare them to defend their own peoples and territories. However, I notice that there is nothing about more trainers in this motion, and indeed, the minister has said that it is not in the cards. I wonder if it is because of the Conservatives' budget cuts.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed that the government is approaching the time when it cannot maintain the structure and function of the Canadian Armed Forces, the way the budget has been declining. I would like to ask the minister if that is why this very important work of training Iraqis is not going to be expanded. Instead there is bombing in Syria. Is that because the budget is not—

*Government Orders*

• (1710)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** There needs to be some time remaining for the hon. minister to respond.

The hon. Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

**Hon. Chris Alexander:** Mr. Speaker, that is from the party of the decade of darkness. That is from the party that jokes about CF-18s, and certainly would never have deployed them in this context, and certainly is not supporting a motion to continue their deployment. That is from a party whose leader, in speaking to this motion, could not even bring himself to pronounce the word “terrorist” or “terrorist”, not once in his speech, nor did I hear it from the hon. member.

If we had a situation where this debate and this motion were in any way governed by Liberal thinking, we would be discussing all night. Meanwhile, ISIL is beheading people. ISIL is victimizing people. ISIL has caused two million people inside Iraq to flee. Four million who have left Syria are now refugees, and six or seven million are displaced inside Syria, many of them by ISIL's allies and ISIL itself.

Inaction and sitting on the sidelines is not an option, but that is exactly what the Liberal Party of Canada has now fallen into, its lowest point in history, advocating. It is shameful.

**Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is one of those times when as parliamentarians we take on one of the greatest debates. Something that happens only under the Conservative government is that we debate deploying our troops and putting them in harm's way. It is a practice we began with the Afghanistan mission. We did it with Libya, and this is the second time we are doing it with Operation Impact.

I know that our troops are always prepared to go into harm's way. This is a mission they volunteer for. This is a life career they choose. I know that their training, skill, and bravery will serve them well as they carry out the mission in Iraq and Syria.

With that, I would like to pay tribute to Sergeant Andrew Doiron for his sacrifice for his country. He unfortunately was killed in a friendly fire accident that occurred in the Kurdish region, where he was working alongside our Kurdish peshmerga partners training them, advising them, assisting them, and essentially making sure that they can execute their battle plans, win back territory, and liberate villages that have been taken by ISIL.

At the same time, we have to remember some of the first casualties ISIL was able to inspire. They included Corporal Nathan Cirillo, who died at the National War Memorial when the attack on Parliament Hill occurred on October 22, days before we ever deployed any air force, and Warrant officer Patrice Vincent, who was targeted October 20, in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, when he was getting a cup of coffee at Tim Hortons, of all things.

ISIL is an incredible threat. It has been said that they are using 21st century social media and 20th century weaponry to carry out 13th century barbarism. This is a threat we have been witnessing on television as they have promoted their genocide. This jihadist terrorist organization has documented the crucifixion of Christians and how the death cult trapped so many Yazidis on the mountain.

They sell women and girls into sexual slavery. We have seen them behead all other ethnic minorities, including Shias and what they call apostate Sunnis. They have not stopped with the adults; we have watched them murder children.

This ethnic cleansing was horrific and gut-wrenching for anyone who saw it. Of course, it was played in the media.

They did not stop there with their ethnic cleansing, with their genocide, with their jihadist, warped ideology and screwed up ideas on religion. They captured aid workers and journalists. They sold some off for ransom. Ultimately they beheaded most of them on national television and bragged about it. Then we witnessed the barbaric and sadistic burning of the Jordanian pilot.

This really did establish what was happening in Iraq and Syria and the threat they represent to the region. We also saw them inspire westerners, including Canadians, to sign up and travel to Syria and Iraq and become jihadist warriors. We saw them inspire people around the world, including here in Canada, to become terrorists in their own countries. We saw what happened in Copenhagen, France, and Australia.

This organization, this jihadist genocidal death cult called ISIL, the Islamic State, has to be stopped. It is in Canada's national interest to go to Iraq, as we have for the last six months, and expand this mission to include Syria to ensure that ISIL does not establish its caliphate, headquartered in the so-called capital of Iraq.

• (1715)

If they do that, they will continue to bring their terror to Canada, to our allies, and continue to have their genocide grow in the region.

It has never been the Canadian way to sit on the sidelines. It has never been the Canadian way to take a pass when we have these types of brutal regimes gaining ground, and because of our intervention, along with our allies, 25% of the territory in Iraq now has been won back.

The aid and assist role that Canada and our coalition partners have played with our special operations forces in training Iraqi and Kurdish militias and security forces has been so far successful. Our air strikes have supported them and have degraded the capability of ISIL within Iraq, but they are coalescing and consolidating their fighting team in eastern Syria. It is a lawless land in the east, and ISIL has control.

The terminology and, really when it comes down to it, the reason we need to go to Syria to uproot ISIL and degrade them so they are not a threat to us here in Canada is no different than when the Liberals first deployed Canadian Armed Forces, without debate in this House of Commons, to Afghanistan because of the safe haven that the Taliban was offering to Al Qaeda for allowing them the ability to go out and attack our allies, which included killing Canadians in the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington.



*Government Orders*

Of course, Al Qaeda had been perpetrating these types of attacks around the world against predominantly U.S. interests and U.S. facilities, but those targets were ultimately nailed by the terrorist activities. However, that principle, that objective, which the Liberal government of 2002 saw as being necessary and committed us to a war that lasted 12 years, was done without any debate, without any transparency. That national interest is no different today than it was back then.

Through this whole process, we have been extremely accountable. Today I have been hearing the opposition criticize us for not being accountable. We are the first government to bring forward resolutions for full debate and full disclosure on these missions before we deploy or extend. We are the first government to have held ongoing technical briefings with the media and with parliamentarians on what is happening on an ongoing basis. Over 15 technical briefings have been held in the last six months on our activities, plus the ministers of National Defence and Foreign Affairs have been appearing before committees of both foreign affairs and national defence, ensuring that parliamentarians were informed.

We talk about the Liberals and how they have abandoned their values. I listened to the Minister of Veterans Affairs very closely, how he clearly documented the Liberals' proud history of ensuring that Canada always does the heavy lifting when we needed to be in military interventions, which they have totally abandoned today. The Liberals do not replicate or resemble themselves in any way, shape or form from a decade ago.

I do not understand why New Democrats would not want to participate. Social democratic parties in Europe, like that of the leader of France, are involved in Operation Impact with our allies. The Danes and the Dutch are all involved, and New Democrats are prepared to sit back and watch this genocide taking place. They are prepared to sacrifice more lives, and that is not acceptable.

We will go forward into Syria under the UN charter, article 51, which clearly states that for self-defence or collective self-defence, we have a right to go into another nation where attacks are being launched. The Government of Iraq has made the request. The United States has already reported to the UN that they will participate, as they already have for several months, and we will do the same to ensure that we degrade the capability of ISIL to carry out their terrorist attacks and brutality in the region, and of course prevent them from being able to do it here in Canada or any other allied nation.

• (1720)

We will continue with our humanitarian aid because it is important. Canada has been very generous. The taxpayers of Canada, via the government, have already been charitable and donated over \$700 million to help feed 1.7 million refugees in the region. They have helped clothe and shelter 1.25 million and allowed half a million kids to get to school.

In closing I will say that we will continue to do that in the long term, as the Prime Minister has said, to ensure that once we achieve peace and stability in the region, we will help rebuild it as Canada has always done because we are a generous nation.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Northwest Territories, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for giving us his interpretation

of the events here. When we look at the situation in Syria and Iraq, we see that ISIL is the most well-funded and most well-positioned terrorist organization that we have seen in the world to date.

What has the government done in terms of working diplomatically through its allies to reduce the financial resources of ISIL, to close off the exchange of oil from its territories that it is occupying now, so that we can actually stifle the ability of this group to do the type of aggressive action that it is doing right now?

**Mr. James Bezan:** Mr. Speaker, as you know, Canada and our allies have been working very hard to ensure that terrorist organizations like ISIL do not have the ability to raise revenues nor make it possible for people to donate money to them through financial instruments that are available to them. We are always searching out through intelligence agencies to figure out how money and transactions are being made.

On the issue of oil, we realize that there are ships that leave ports with oil from ISIL that come back empty and nobody ever knows where they dock. There has to be more surveillance on that standpoint. We have to prevent terrorists from actually having the ability to pump oil and make money off other natural resources. They control the lawless lands of eastern Syria.

If we are going to be effective, we have to stop the caliphate. We have to stop it from being able to establish an area from which it can generate revenue, train fighters and stage its war and terrorism around the world.

• (1725)

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary and many of his colleagues would have the listeners and the Canadian public think that this debate is about whether the opposition members are concerned about the risks and threats of ISIL. That is not what this debate is about.

On this side of the House, we understand how egregious the behaviour and how unacceptable the behaviour is of that terrorist organization and we have said so all along. Rather than misleading the public, I would encourage the parliamentary secretary to be clear that the debate is on how best to help that situation. We have different ideas than the Conservative members do. That is what this debate should be about.

In his discussion, the parliamentary secretary asked why we are saying that his government is not accountable. I would say it is because the Minister of National Defence has a bad habit of being creative with the truth. The Prime Minister sent special forces into the front-line combat when he explicitly said that he would not. This is a mission with no clear objectives, no plan and no exit strategy.

The Department of Foreign Affairs top people in this area say that they encouraged the Iraqi leaders to move away from militias and put their efforts into a strengthened, professional and inclusive Iraqi army. They say that the Iraqi army is insufficient but it is becoming stronger because of training like Canada is doing. The Liberals want more of that training, more Canadian trainers to train more peshmerga. Why is the—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence.

*Private Members' Business*

**Mr. James Bezan:** Mr. Speaker, nobody is more creative with numbers or the truth than the member for Vancouver Quadra.

She has gone after the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration about the issue of the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report today on military spending. In the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report, on page 10, it says that, by far the most devastating cuts to the military happened from 1995 to 2004. Who was in government at that time? It was the Liberals who were in power during that time. They gutted our military. It corresponded completely with the decade of darkness.

In eight out of ten years, spending by the Liberals on the GDP percentage was 1% or less. For the other two years, it was 1.1% GDP. We cannot fight the numbers or the truth in that matter.

Unlike the Liberals, who sent our troops to Afghanistan without the proper equipment and with very little notice, and who committed us to a battle that lasted for 12 years, I can tell members that our troops are going in well equipped, well trained and with all the backing that they need to get the job done as quickly as possible.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

### NATIONAL SPINAL CORD INJURY AWARENESS DAY ACT

The House resumed from February 25, 2015, consideration of the motion that Bill C-643, An Act to establish National Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Day, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this afternoon, I am pleased to express my support for Bill C-643, An Act to establish National Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Day.

Bill C-643, which was introduced in the House of Commons for the first time on December 8, 2014, designates the third Friday of September in each and every year as national spinal cord injury awareness day. Like my NDP colleagues, I want to voice my support for this legislative initiative.

In Canada, there are 86,000 people with spinal cord injuries and, unfortunately, 4,300 new cases are added each year. These injuries cost almost \$2.67 billion per year and cause a great deal of physical and psychosocial suffering for those who sustain them. This national day is important to raise public awareness of the reality of people living with these injuries and the difficulties they have to face, as well as the work done by their caregivers and the scientists who are trying to improve their lives.

In my riding of LaSalle—Émard, many organizations work not only with people who have spinal cord injuries, but also with people with reduced mobility, people in wheelchairs, in short, people with any type of disability. Many organizations work to try to help people with disabilities integrate into society and especially to raise public awareness in order to make that integration easier.

I want to mention the organization Handicap Action Intégration and its director, Mody Maka Barry, who also has reduced mobility and uses a wheelchair. He wants to use his organization to help people with reduced mobility find their inner strength and have a

healthy and fulfilling life and to prove to them that a physical limitation does not have to hold them back, because it is courage and determination that count.

Handicap Action Intégration also raises awareness among employers to encourage them to hire people with a disability. A recent report in *The Globe and Mail* talked about the benefits of hiring a person with a disability. That diversity is often very rewarding for a workplace. It creates bonds and allows people with a disability to work, whether or not their disability is due to a spinal cord injury that forces them to use a wheelchair.

Those who are integrated into the workforce will not only benefit from a well-paying job and, often, get out from under financial difficulties, but will also be able to contribute a great deal to society. The article mentioned a number of cases where employers benefited from the rewarding experience of hiring people with a disability. I would like to quote the article:

● (1730)

[English]

The article is entitled “Working wisdom: How workers with disabilities give companies an edge”. It says:

Opportunity for many people like him [a person living with a disability] is still scarce.

It means that there are not a lot of opportunities, as not a lot of employers are bold enough to hire people with disabilities.

It continues:

More than two million Canadian adults, or 11 per cent of the population, have some sort of disability and only about half of them participate in the labour force. Of those who do look for work, the jobless rate is 40 per cent or more for some groups. Underemployment is higher and even if they hold a job, incomes among adults with disabilities are typically far lower than the rest of the population.

● (1735)

[Translation]

I think a day like the one proposed in Bill C-643 could raise awareness about what life is like for people with a disability and how vulnerable many of them are. It could also help us see what we might do to help them integrate into the workforce and improve not only their financial situation, but also their physical and psychological condition.

I will share an example of an employer who hired someone with a disability. These are the benefits he discovered.

[English]

The benefit for the [employer], he added, is that it has a work force that more closely resembles its customer base. And its workers can give insights into how to reach different customers and keep them happy.

*Private Members' Business*

[*Translation*]

In other words, someone who has a disability or who uses a wheelchair to get around can bring new ideas to an employer such as a bank, for example. If the employer provides services to a broad clientele, the employee with a disability will be more in tune with the clientele's needs. What other employers have found is that many of these employees are very loyal and are also hard workers. They pour their hearts into their work and diversify a company's workforce. This article also shows very clearly that employers who recognize the strength of their employees and hire people who live with a disability, have reduced mobility or use a wheelchair gain a clear advantage.

The day of awareness proposed by Bill C-643 will promote all these benefits. First and foremost, it will shed light on the situation and the vulnerability of many people with disabilities and show how society in general can benefit from their integration.

I would like to reiterate the NDP's support for initiatives that foster the employment of people living with a disability and make our society even more accessible. The NDP is also a strong champion of the fight against poverty, whether it affects people with disabilities or people in precarious situations in general.

We continue to support people with disabilities and to work towards a more open and inclusive society. We also want to make our workplaces more inclusive.

I reiterate my support for Bill C-643.

[*English*]

**Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to speak to the private member's bill, Bill C-643, an act to establish a national spinal cord injury awareness day, put forward by the hon. member for Montcalm. It is important that she has brought this issue of spinal cord injury before the House.

Bill C-643 recognizes the courage and determination of Canadians living with spinal cord injury, and raises awareness of the importance of creating environments that encourage an active return to an inclusive society.

The bill also recognizes the dedication of their caregivers, which may include their families, friends, and professional health care workers who provide them with the vital support they need.

It also acknowledges the important contributions of leading Canadian scientists, whose research has improved the lives of hundreds of people with spinal cord injuries.

Bill C-643 aims to establish the third Friday in September every year as national spinal cord injury awareness day.

This would seek to reduce the risk of spinal cord injuries through increasing awareness and prevention, and it would also benefit those currently suffering from a spinal cord injury by shining a light on this important health issue across our country—with local government, non-government organizations, volunteer groups, and the private sector.

Spinal cord injuries include damage to any part of the spinal cord and may be traumatic or non-traumatic in nature.

Traumatic spinal cord injuries can result from many different causes including falls, traffic accidents, occupational and sports injuries, as well as violence.

Non-traumatic spinal cord injuries typically involve an underlying cause, such as an infectious disease, tumour, a muscle or bone disease such as osteoarthritis, or spina bifida

Regardless of how spinal cord injuries occur, both traumatic and non-traumatic injuries can be devastating for individuals and their families.

In terms of how traumatic spinal cord injuries occur, based upon hospitalization records from 2010 to 2011, there were 577 hospitalizations in Canada attributed to spinal cord injuries. Of these, 54% were the result of non-sport related falls, while 31% were attributable to vehicle accidents, and 4% were a results of a sport injury.

To gain a better understanding of neurological conditions in Canada, our government made a \$15 million investment in 2011 to initiate the national population study on neurological conditions. It was led by the Public Health Agency of Canada and Neurological Health Charities Canada in collaboration with Health Canada and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. The study was composed of thirteen research projects, three national surveys, and seven simulation models.

After the study was completed, Alzheimer's disease, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, and Parkinson's disease were all added to the existing Canadian chronic disease surveillance system, which is managed by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

The study has improved our understanding of the incidence and prevalence of neurological conditions such as spinal cord injury. It has also shed light on the impact of neurological conditions on individuals living with these conditions, their families, and their communities.

Through this bill, we can create greater awareness for spinal cord injuries and their impact on the lives of those affected. We can highlight federal injury prevention efforts and showcase advancements in spinal cord injury and stem cell research in Canada, so that we as a country can make further gains.

Our government recognizes the impact spinal cord injuries have on Canadians and has directed significant financial investment into research to generate new knowledge and technologies to improve patient outcomes and quality of life.

Through our support for research on the functioning and disorders of the brain and spinal cord, I believe we are making a difference. With federal support, the work of top researchers has contributed to our understanding for the changes in nerve cells that could prevent and alleviate chronic neuropathic pain syndrome and improve recoveries of limb function following spinal cord injury or trauma.

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●(1740)

Through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, our government funds research that covers the full spectrum of spinal cord research. This includes basic biological and clinical research to population health, health services, and quality of life and health determinants.

Since 2006, our government has invested \$57 million toward spinal cord injury research to generate new knowledge and technologies to improve patient outcomes and quality of life. We have also invested \$470 million in stem cell research since 2006 and over \$53 million in 2013-14 alone.

Research in stem cell clinical therapies has the potential to revolutionize the treatment of degenerative diseases, such as spinal cord injury, and greatly improve the quality of life of many Canadians.

In September 2014, the Minister of Health announced a federal investment in support of 32 new research projects under the Canada Brain Research Fund. One of these included the development of the Rick Hansen Alberta Spinal Cord Injury Registry through the University of Calgary.

As some may recall, the Rick Hansen Foundation was founded in 1988 after Mr. Hansen so bravely and with such determination completed the Man in Motion World Tour in Vancouver. The foundation works toward removing the barriers that limit the participation of people with disabilities in society. Our government proudly supports the Rick Hansen Foundation, an organization that is inspired by the dream of creating an accessible and inclusive world, and driven to finding a cure for spinal cord injury.

An investment of \$30 million was provided by our government to the foundation from 2007 to 2013, to implement a spinal cord injury data system across Canada, support spinal cord injury research and promote best practices in spinal cord injury care. This investment aims to improve health care and quality of life for Canadians living with a spinal cord injury.

In order to maintain the momentum of the Rick Hansen Foundation, our government announced a further investment of \$35 million to this foundation until 2018.

Bill C-643 would add to significant efforts already under way in Canada for people living with spinal cord injury.

In Canada, other jurisdictions such as Saskatchewan and Manitoba have commemorated spinal cord injury awareness. In 2009, the government of Saskatchewan, in collaboration with the Canadian Paraplegic Association, proclaimed May 2009 as Spinal Cord Injury and Physical Disabilities Awareness Month to raise awareness about spinal cord injuries and other physical disabilities. Manitoba declared a similar Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Day in May 2011.

I hope my comments today have given everyone an understanding of the impact spinal cord injuries has in our country.

I would encourage each member to lend their support to Bill C-643 to establish the third Friday in September as the designated day for national spinal cord injury awareness day across Canada to increase awareness of spinal cord injury.

●(1745)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the bill we are debating this evening would establish a national spinal cord injury awareness day. I support this bill and I encourage all of my colleagues to support it, since people with spinal cord injuries face daily challenges, and the public needs to be made aware of that.

We need to increase awareness of what these individuals go through. They face many problems in dealing with their disability. It is not just a matter of highlighting the dangers of high-risk activities, as is often the case in awareness campaigns. We also need more awareness about the needs people with spinal cord injuries have and the obstacles and challenges they face.

A spinal cord injury cuts communication between the brain and the body and leads to full or partial paralysis of the limbs and torso. The extent of the paralysis depends on the location of the injury on the spinal column and its severity. A low injury causes paraplegia, which refers to paralysis of the lower limbs, while a high injury would cause quadriplegia, paralysis of all four limbs.

Given that the spinal cord controls the functioning of the lower and upper limbs, people with spinal cord injuries often must use a wheelchair. The consequences of this type of paralysis lead to very costly care. The cost of traumatic spinal cord injuries is estimated at \$2.7 billion a year for every newly injured person. In addition to the costs for care, the costs of reorganizing one's daily life need to be factored in. When you are in a wheelchair, you need to reorganize your home or space to have access to everything without too much difficulty. That is very expensive.

Awareness days are a useful tool to educate people and raise funds. We must not overlook that.

Making the third Friday of September national spinal cord injury awareness day will help the cause of organizations that run campaigns across the country to raise funds for research, care and financial support for victims. Even a small contribution from the general public would make it possible to change the lives of those affected by spinal cord injuries, their loved ones and their families as well.

In 2013, about 86,000 people and their families were affected by spinal cord injuries in Canada, and some 4,300 new cases are added each year.

Investments in the health care system are necessary. The government must show leadership and must not abandon the provinces. This bill reminds us just how much we need investments in our health care system. An awareness day makes it possible to highlight the needs of people with disabilities in terms of both health care and resources. We need to be able to count on a federal government that is willing to work with the provinces and territories and make long-term investments to ensure that our public health care system meets the needs of all Canadians.

Health care is a priority for all Canadians, and it should be a priority for their government too. However, the Conservatives are undermining our cherished public health care system.

• (1750)

They have unilaterally imposed cuts of \$36 billion in transfer payments to the provinces for the next 10 years. These cuts are undermining our health care system. Currently, Canadians are not receiving health care in a timely fashion when they need it. Our seniors, for example, are receiving inadequate levels of health care. Most federal government expenditures are dropping alarmingly at the very time when the population of Canada is aging. As a result, the provinces and the territories are inheriting a huge financial burden.

Concretely, we are seeing medical clinics close their doors. In my constituency of Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, three clinics have closed already and a fourth will do so in 2015. This is unacceptable. The government must adhere to the principles of the Canada Health Act.

If the Conservative government is not capable of maintaining a funding formula that will allow the provinces and territories to fund universal access to quality services, it should step aside and let us do it. We on this side of the House will listen; we will sit down with the provinces and territories in order to find appropriate solutions. The NDP has a plan to strengthen our health care system because we all deserve to have access to care, regardless of where we live.

In fact, the NDP will fill the gaps that the Conservatives are leaving in health, especially the health of those with disabilities. The Conservatives have had five years in which to come to grips with the problem of the real poverty that many people with disabilities are experiencing. They have done nothing to improve the workplace accommodation measures for persons with disabilities who are trying to be part of the workforce. The caregiver tax credit is of no use to many people with disabilities, since they do not even have a taxable income. It does not even apply to the spouses who care for their disabled partners. As we can see, much remains to be done to help those living with disabilities in our country.

In conclusion, I invite all my colleagues to support designating the third Friday in September as national spinal cord injury awareness day. Let us not forget that most accidents happen in the summer and the third Friday is a busy time for spinal cord rehabilitation centres. This is the reality surrounding this bill that we should keep in mind. I hope that, for once, the Conservative government will consider it.

• (1755)

[English]

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I stand today to say that the Liberal Party will be supporting Bill C-643, which, as we know, seeks to establish a day to recognize the impacts that spinal cord injuries have on Canadians, the health care system, and the economy.

This bill would bring awareness to this serious and debilitating condition. We support that idea because not a lot of people understand and know about spinal cord injuries. They think it is something that happens after a car accident and do not understand

### *Private Members' Business*

the full nature of it, the costs to the health care system, and the long-term residual effects on its victims.

The front end of a spinal cord injury is acutely traumatic and places great costs on the acute health care system, such as long-term hospitalization. A lot of care is necessary, depending on the severity of the spinal cord injury.

Then there are the long-term health implications. People who have suffered spinal cord injuries tend to have very reduced mobility and life expectancy. They also have impaired neurological recovery and are unable to recover some of the use of their central nervous system.

What is surprising to a lot of people is that currently 95,000 Canadians are living with spinal cord injuries. This number is expected to rise with the increasing age of the population, because age, interestingly enough, is a factor in spinal cord injuries.

The *Canadian Medical Association Journal* is predicting 4,300 new cases each year. The number of persons suffering with spinal cord injuries will increase as the population ages. Approximately 51% of spinal cord injuries are a result of trauma, such as car accidents, skiing injuries, and so on. We know that is true. Most people think that is the only reason, but there are also non-traumatic injuries, such as ALS, cancer, and degenerative diseases of the neurological system that cause the spinal cord to be severed or damaged so that the spinal cord is not continuous and does not work.

The Rick Hansen Foundation estimates that the economic costs for newly injured Canadians is approximately \$2.7 billion. That is a huge amount of money. This cost includes not only acute, long-term, or chronic health care but also new equipment and modifications made to people's homes to enable them to live with the long-term injury they have sustained. For instance, the lifetime medical costs for a quadriplegic exceed \$3 million in the lifetime of that one person. With respect to a paraplegic, we are looking at \$1.6 million in lifetime costs. For many Canadian families the average cost of a simple manual wheelchair is \$4,000 to \$5,000, and the average cost of a power wheelchair is about \$10,000 to \$15,000. Those costs are not currently covered under the health care system.

We also know that people who are confined and unable to move because of long-term injuries, such as spinal cord injuries, suffer from higher levels of depression and ill health consistent with a changed ability to cope with life. Depression in people with spinal cord injuries is one of the biggest reasons they tend to go to see family physicians.

With respect to awareness of spinal cord injuries, people do not know or realize that while 51% are from trauma, the other 49% are from other effects, such as seniors becoming older and falling or as a result of basic neurological defects such as ALS and the like. People think the spinal cord has to be severed to cause a traumatic injury.

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Therefore, if we do anything this day, we need to bring awareness of this problem to Canadians with respect to the costs to the health care system, to families, and to society, as well as the loss of person-days of work. Many people are not able to work in the system or can only do certain jobs. It is important for people to understand this and to realize the importance of research on spinal cord injuries with respect to how we can bridge that damaged spinal cord to allow people to live with some quality of life. We are now finding out that research is showing that if a spinal cord injury is caught early enough, some regeneration of the spinal cord is possible.

• (1800)

This is good. It is helpful for all of the people for whom the tragedy of a spinal cord injury is not only one of cost and loss of productivity but also of loss of ability to do things they used to do before, as well as the depression and the mental health problems that come with it.

If this day would improve awareness for Canadians, then we can get the political will to do the necessary research in prevention of spinal cord injuries, treatment of spinal cord injuries, and recovery from spinal cord injuries.

We learn. I was one of the Chair-Leaders on the Hill trying to get around in wheelchairs and suddenly realized that ordinarily I should not use the disabled section of the women's washroom. I had this realization because I was waiting there in a wheelchair while someone who was able was using it. Lack of consideration in that simple area was enough to show how difficult mobility is for people with spinal cord injuries.

Motor vehicle accidents, including those involving all-terrain vehicles, account for 31% of spinal cord injuries, so we might want to look at how we regulate the use and safety of all-terrain vehicles. Seniors and age are issues, as 46% of injuries result from falls, while 5% result from acts of violence and 18% result from sports and recreational injuries and other unknown and degenerative diseases.

New methods for treating spinal cord injuries are being worked on, but we need to ramp it up, because the ability to continue with life the way one knew it is invaluable. We cannot even weigh the cost of not being able to do that to the human person.

Work is being done at UBC, my home province, and in 2012 CIHR gave a grant for research on cardiovascular health in persons with spinal cord injuries. The main cause of death of persons with spinal cord injuries has become cardiovascular disease, because of their inability to be mobile and the inactivity that followed, so work is being done now to see how we can prevent cardiovascular disease in persons with spinal cord injuries. There is hope for that.

We can improve the quality of life and save the health care system up to \$70 million annually, but the most important thing is to give back to persons with spinal cord injuries the ability to regain their lives, do the things that they formerly could do, and have a full quality of life.

• (1805)

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to speak to Bill C-643, An Act to establish National Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Day. We have a number of awareness days in

the House, and for me, this is one of the more important ones we have had since I have been here, which is nine years.

I would first like to congratulate the member for introducing this legislation. It is obviously an important issue to the member for Montcalm, but it is also important for members from ridings across the country. Spinal cord injuries are happening all over Canada because of accidents and other things. As the previous speaker mentioned, disease can cause issues with the spinal cord.

My spouse works for an organization that helps young people with physical disabilities, and spinal cord injuries is one of them. It is a tremendous burden, if that is the right word to use. "Challenge", I think, would be a better word. Such an injury is a tremendous challenge not only to the individual who is suffering from a spinal cord injury but also to the family members and friends who are asked to look after them.

The previous speaker from the Liberal Party mentioned that about 95,000 Canadians live with neurological conditions caused by spinal cord injury. My research shows that it is actually likely that in 2011 it was closer to 120,000. There are a significant number of people in this country suffering from issues due to spinal cord injuries. They are often life-altering, of course, to individuals and their families. We see that in the House with our colleagues. We have been very fortunate that our colleagues who have spinal cord issues overcame those challenges, ran for office, and were elected to the Parliament of Canada. It took a tremendous amount of courage on their part to make that happen.

These injuries also have a significant impact on the Canadian economy. It sounds cold for me to say that, but there is a loss of opportunity both for individuals who suffer from spinal cord injuries and for their families, who have to take time and effort away from what they might otherwise be doing in terms of being productive in jobs or other areas and instead look after their loved ones. That is a loss.

In 2013, a study supported by Health Canada and the Rick Hansen Institute estimated the following:

...the lifetime economic burden per individual [with traumatic spinal cord injuries] ranges from \$1.5 million for persons with incomplete paraplegia to \$3.0 million for persons with complete tetraplegia....

Bill C-643 reminds us of the importance of recognizing the courage and determination of those with spinal cord injuries as well as the perseverance of the scientists whose research has improved the lives of hundreds of people with spinal cord injuries.

We have a lot of bills these days. This one in particular is important, because it would bring attention at least once a year to the challenges that individuals face and would also bring awareness to the public. We need to leverage these days that we have and not just pay lip service to the issue.

That particular day of the year would be an opportunity for all organizations, individuals, and families to rally together to make sure that governments, organizations, not-for-profit organizations, communities, and even community planning have an understanding of the issues and challenges facing people who suffer from spinal cord injuries. It would be an opportunity to make sure we have the resources and opportunities for those who have suffered from a spinal cord injury, whether those resources are in finance, research, or a physical plant, as was previously mentioned.

• (1810)

I think the mover of this bill should be fairly excited, because I think the vote is going to be unanimous in the House. I certainly support it. I know that our government supports the actions we need to take to help prevent these injuries in the first place and supports research for the development of innovative treatments for those who are suffering from spinal cord injuries.

From 2006 to 2014, the Government of Canada invested close to \$57 million in spinal cord injury research, including more than \$6.5 million in 2013-14 alone, through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, which we all know is a great organization. It provides support in a number of areas of health research for the betterment of Canadians.

Research projects supported through this investment cover a broad range of issues related to spinal cord injuries, from regeneration to repair of damaged nerves and nerve fibres in the spinal cord to the development of new guidelines on best practices for the treatment of patients. This investment also contributed to improving our understanding of how the spinal cord transmits neural signals between the brain and the rest of the body.

For example, last June, CIHR announced an investment of \$1.7 million for a research project at Dalhousie University on mapping how a family of neurons in the spinal cord controls subconscious movements. This fundamental knowledge is an important first step in the development of new tools to restore movement in patients suffering from neurological injury or disease.

As we learn new things that are brought to us, it always amazes me the importance and quality of scientists we have in this country. We are proud as a government to be supporting those scientists who are doing great work, which is way beyond my comprehension. I am very thankful that we have people with that skill level, knowledge, and commitment to finding health solutions, including for spinal cord injuries in this country.

Another good example of research supported by CIHR is the project of Dr. Yves De Koninck of Laval University. It aims to improve our understanding of how nerve cells regulate pain and how this process is altered in the spinal cords of individuals with nerve damage. This research will contribute to designing treatments for preventing and alleviating chronic neuropathic pain or increased pain sensitivity in people with traumatic spinal cord injuries.

This fantastic scientist received the Barbara Turnbull award for his contribution in this important area. The annual award has been presented since 2001 by CIHR, the Barbara Turnbull Foundation, and Brain Canada to raise awareness of the thousands of Canadians

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who are living with a spinal cord injury and to promote research in this area.

CIHR is also supported by a number of research initiatives that have contributed to advancing knowledge on the effects of spinal cord injuries and the most effective treatments to address them. For example, from 2004 to 2010, CIHR and its partners invested more than \$82 million to support a major strategic initiative called the regenerative medicine and nanomedicine initiative. Research supported through this investment focused on the renewal of bodily tissues and organs, the restoration of function with natural and bioengineering means, and the development of new materials to diagnose, treat, and repair damaged tissues.

Many of us have a friend, a neighbour, a family member, or a colleague right here in this House who have suffered a life-altering spinal cord injury. While there have been many scientific advancements to help in treatment and sometimes in recovery from these injuries, there is still much to be done. Bill C-643 will help raise awareness so that everyone can learn how they can play a role in preventing spinal cord injuries.

I would like to thank hon. colleagues for their attention and invite them to support this legislation when it comes to a vote.

• (1815)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Manon Perreault (Montcalm, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, my thanks to all the members who participated in this debate. Everything I have heard here this evening is truly heartwarming. This debate was held in an exemplary fashion and with the utmost respect for our function.

Creating a national spinal cord injury awareness day will make a positive contribution to Canadian society. I would like to tell all my distinguished colleagues that persons with disabilities from all over Canada have contacted my offices to express their gratitude, and I have to share their thanks with my colleagues.

Let me also thank all those who made the study of this bill possible, all those who helped design and draft the bill, and all those who helped move it forward. The seriousness of their commitment shows an exemplary level of concern with prevention and with raising awareness not only of the challenges facing those with spinal cord injuries, but also of the treatments and research in this area of expertise.

By going through the many stages that led to this bill, which I am honoured to put before the House today, I think I have gained a better appreciation of the real needs of those living with spinal cord injuries. Let me explain.

I have gained a greater understanding of what an initiative like this special day can contribute. This bill is representative of the purpose of the political work we are all here to do because it helps us better ourselves as a society in meaningful ways.

*Government Orders*

Sometimes we get the feeling that we are not doing enough, but in this case, even though this bill seems like a modest initiative at first glance, it is an incredible tool that leads us to a new stage in our progress toward accepting people with disabilities in Canada. This step forward will lead to others and so on.

The quality of life of all our fellow citizens, whether they are affected by spinal cord injuries or not, will improve. The goal is to make social acceptance more universal and to raise awareness among employers of the unsuspected qualities of those with spinal cord injuries, thereby making our communities more effective, productive and just.

The practical nature of this reality and the idealism of these principles work well together in this much-needed bill. We have to promote acceptance within social networks and value inclusion because it is both compassionate and for the common good.

In my opinion, one of the foundations of our work is ensuring that the best decisions are made to help our society progress, that the best policies are employed for the common good and that our measures are effective when they are implemented.

I truly believe that this bill to create a national spinal cord injury awareness day is a step in the right direction, and of course I will continue to speak in support of this bill until it passes in the House of Commons.

To back my point of view, I turned to a number of stakeholders. I asked a lot of questions and tried to get some answers, and I listened to the opinions of many experts and workers on the ground. I also learned about many approaches and initiatives in the area of spinal cord injury.

There is still a tremendous amount of work to be done, but we have reached a consensus regarding the best actions to take. Creating a national spinal cord injury awareness day seems to be the approach that best meets the various needs of that community. This measure has the potential to be extremely beneficial to a broad cross-section of Canadians, all without any cost. We simply cannot do without this crucial bill. The ball is now in our court. We have examined the issue and reached our conclusions, so now let us make it happen.

There has been so much brainstorming, collaboration and passionate discussion; so many people have invested in a common goal; so much effort has been made and energy spent selflessly. Let us follow the example of these often anonymous people who, by doing their small part, have managed to put together a simple, yet effective bill. We must take this opportunity to do our part and vote in favour of the bill to create a national awareness day.

I want to mention two organizations: Spinal Cord Injury Canada, whose director, Bobby White, has supported me from the beginning, and Moelle épinière et motricité Québec, with Walter Zelaya.

I am sure we will get there. We can, we must, and we will. Canadians are dignified and proud. Let us create a spinal cord injury awareness policy that reflects that.

• (1820)

Let us see this bill as a positive reflection of our society, a commendable unifying effort that everyone can stand behind. On

behalf of people with disabilities in Montcalm, Quebec and Canada, I want to sincerely thank my colleagues. I am deeply touched by everything they had to say about spinal cord injuries.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** The vote is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### MILITARY CONTRIBUTION AGAINST ISIL

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Before we resume debate, I would just like to remind all hon. members that in this debate, members have 10 minutes for their speeches and five minutes for questions and comments. It was noted earlier today that sometimes the questions have been a little long and the answers have been a bit long. Unfortunately, this will ultimately lead to not as many members being able to participate in the debate. If members will bear with the Chair, with five-minute questions and comments, to have two, that would be two-and-a-half minutes per turn, which would be about one minute and 15 seconds for the question and the response.

The Chair will give an indication at around a minute. At a minute and 15, members ought to be finished. At one minute 30, even if members are at mid-sentence, the Chair will interrupt in order to move on to the next question.

The Chair would certainly appreciate the co-operation of all members. The purpose of this is to allow as many members as possible to participate in the debate.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for B.C. Southern Interior.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for the wise words you just said, encouraging us to have a full debate and giving us time to answer questions.

I wish I could say that it gives me pleasure to speak to this motion. Unfortunately, I cannot. It is not with pleasure that I rise here. It is with a sense of duty that, with the expansion of our mission in Iraq and now into Syria, I see there is no question that we are being drawn into what will turn out to be a long and costly prolonged conflict.



*Government Orders*

The Prime Minister tells us that our country is under threat. His Minister of National Defence states that if we do not do anything, and allow this organization to metastasize into an actual state with its resources and army, ISIL will recruit and radicalize people from all over the world. The implication is that somehow they will all head to Canada to attack us. Therefore, by bombing ISIL in Iraq and Syria, this will be prevented.

There has been a horrendous number of atrocities right across the world. We just need to bring into question central Africa, which our leader and foreign affairs critic talked about. Millions of people lost their lives. We did not have this debate about going into central Africa. We did not have this debate about going into other areas where people were being liquidated and where atrocities were being committed.

The question is why we have chosen this. I just mentioned the train of thought. I believe that its logic was supposed to send us into combat, and that merits some careful analysis.

It is my understanding that all of the threats to Canada have come over the Internet. There have been messages encouraging fanatics to take up the cause. If that is the case, do we realistically believe that these messages will stop as we continue to bomb the hell out of this region? I submit that they will increase, and ISIL will recruit more deranged individuals to its cause.

From what I have been able to ascertain, Canada is one of roughly ten nations carrying out air strikes. Only one of the other nations, Jordan, is from the immediate region. Another, Morocco, is from northern Africa. The first question that comes to mind is this. If this campaign is so vital to the security of this region and to the world, where are the other countries? We could legitimately state, whether we agree or disagree on this mission, that we have done more than our share. Our resources are limited. In my opinion, they could be better spent reinforcing our protection right here on the ground in Canada under the existing legislation, not what the government is trying to ram through here.

Most of all, we could ensure that no more veterans have to come to Ottawa to demand the assistance that they so rightly deserve. I spent time in the Royal Canadian Navy, and as a former naval officer, I would say that our navy is in a state of disarray. Instead of bombing in other countries, we could spend a lot of this money to beef up our protection and ensure that we have good vessels to protect our coastlines, as an example.

I would also like to submit that we send troops into war as a last resort. This is not a last resort. We need to take a moment to reflect on Afghanistan. In 2005, the previous government was pressured by the then-chief of the defence staff, General Hillier, to send our troops into combat. Other nations and other allies stayed on the sidelines. This tragic conflict cost us 160 lives, 170 deaths by suicide, and hundreds of veterans with permanent physical and mental disabilities. The tragedy in all of this is that we cannot safely say that Afghanistan is a secure country based on all of the democratic principles for which our country stands.

The United States and its coalition of the willing invaded Iraq in 2003. As a result, hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians died. Iraq's army was dismantled. The country turned into chaos. What we

are seeing today with ISIL is a direct result of the destabilization of Iraq by the George Bush regime.

The question arises, therefore, of what will happen if Canada withdraws from this conflict. The answer is probably not a lot. It seems to me that the countries who were initially responsible for this mess, in addition to those in the immediate area, should be the ones that take up the charge against the threat of ISIL.

• (1825)

A leading Iraqi researcher, Munqith al-Dagher, stated that as long as the political and social grievances of Iraq's Sunni community go unaddressed, Canadian air strikes against the Islamic State will not defeat the group. Without giving Sunnis hope for the future, the international coalition fighting the extremist groups will not be successful. That is an interesting point. He goes on to say:

ISIL is not the disease; (it) is just the symptom. If we want to (push Islamic State) out of Iraq and the region, we should deal with the real reasons behind this disease...

(Canada's) prime minister, like U.S. politicians and other politicians in the world...all they think about is sending troops and aircrafts. This is not the way to have a victory over ISIL....

No matter how strong the army is...there will not be any victory without a full cooperation from the people who are living there.

The question, then, is why we are there without having made an effort to seek co-operation, to make sure that the current government of Iraq is in place and works on a solution. The solution to this problem needs to rest with the Iraqis themselves as well as the Americans and others who were responsible for the 2003 invasion. This is not Canada's role. I submit this tragic conflict is not worth any more Canadian lives.

As I mentioned earlier on, in a speech a few months ago, Bernard E. Trainor, a retired U.S. Marine Corps lieutenant general states the following in an article that was published in the *Washington Post* and appeared in the September 26th edition of the *National Post*:

The Islamic State presents a problem to be managed, not a war to be won....

The U.S. role should be limited to helping Kurdish forces and the new Baghdad government better organize to keep the pressure on, with U.S. air strikes contingent on their progress....

The idea of destroying the Islamic State...is nonsense....

The situation in Mesopotamia is a violent game of mistrust and self-interest. The Saudis despise the Iranians but will cut deals with them if doing so is in their interest. Iran will play any card necessary to achieve regional hegemony, while Turkey is coy about its own quest for preeminence. The Gulf States talk out of both sides of their mouths. Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad uses the Islamic State to create problems for other rebels. Iraq plays at democracy as long as it can subjugate the Sunnis. Shiites and Sunnis fight each other while carrying on intramural warfare with their kinsmen. The double-dealing is almost endless. It doesn't make sense to us, but it does to the players. After more than a decade of frustration and humiliation, the United States should have learned that the Middle East is no place for Wilsonianism on steroids.

This is a retired U.S. Marine Corps lieutenant general. As our leader stated in his eloquent speech on this issue a few days ago, what happens when we go into Syria without the permission of the Syrian government? Do we become allies of this despotic regime? What is the end game? Who are we going to support? Are we supporting the regime, or are we supporting other factions fighting against ISIL? What do we make out of all this confusion?

None of this makes any sense.

*Government Orders*

•(1830)

[Translation]

We went from an advise and assist mission to a six-month bombing mission, to a front-line combat mission. We are now getting involved in an 18-month conflict where Canadian troops will exchange fire with members of the Islamic State.

[English]

In conclusion, I would like to say that I have been here for nine years, and I have watched the debate unfold on Afghanistan. I have watched the spin coming from the government, as we have watched our people dying on the field and suffering.

We do not need any more of this. We need to look at this, step back, and ensure that war is a last resort.

**Mr. Bernard Trottier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for La Francophonie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the member's speech, and given the opportunity, I will maybe correct a couple of things he has said.

He mentioned that he thought Jordan and Morocco were conducting air strikes. He should know that Morocco is actually not participating in air strikes.

Countries that are—and these are countries from the region—include Bahrain and Kuwait, which has been providing logistical support to the mission. Bahrain has actually been a participant in the U.S.-led air strikes in Syria since September 2014. Qatar is actually facilitating U.S. air strikes by providing a staging ground for the mission. The United Arab Emirates has also been participating in the air strikes since September.

I will read a quote, and I would like the member to comment. It is from the Kuwaiti minister of foreign affairs. He said that the military attacks are crucial and that their impacts are already providing greater security for the region. Kuwait is a country that knows a thing or two about hegemonistic expansion. It is very close to the region. It is very engaged.

I would like the member to comment on that, please.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question and clarification. I will try to be quick, in following your wishes.

I believe it is mainly up to the countries in the region and I am happy to see that other countries, other than the ones I mentioned, are in there on the ground. They are the ones that are faced with this threat in their region and obviously there should be more countries working together with the Iraqi government and all the different factions to work this out.

We are told this is a direct threat to us here. I do not buy that, as I said in my speech; it is not.

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the comments from the member for British Columbia Southern Interior. It is always refreshing to have a member enter the debate from the perspective of what is the best way forward, given ISIL, which is a real and serious threat to security around the world; rather than the debate being just about whether “they agree with us, and if they do not then they are doing nothing”.

Something that the Liberals think we could really contribute to this situation is enabling Kurdish forces to protect their own communities and people. The member quoted the general talking about it being key to help the Kurdish forces. That is what the Canadian trainers have been doing. We are calling on the government to increase the training force, because only 650 people have been trained and they need more help.

I just wonder why the NDP is not supporting the idea of more trainers behind the wire to enable the Kurdish forces to defend their peoples.

•(1835)

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from British Columbia for her question and thank her for her hard work on this file.

The way I look at it is this. We have seen here that the training mission has gone into a combat mission. We do not believe, and I do not believe, that our people should be in a combat mission in Iraq or in Syria. The other thing is that we have seen the results. We have had one unfortunate death.

The Kurdish have been fighting for years. They have combat experience. I often question why we would be there telling them how to engage in combat experience. I have not really understood that from the point of trying to help them in training, which we have seen has turned into a combat mission.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today's debate contemplates what Canada's role should be with regard to how we respond to the atrocities that ISIL has committed, threats and actions made against the security of Canadian people, its expansionist nature and the humanitarian and human rights crisis it has created.

This morning, the member for Vancouver Quadra said that the motion in front of us, which presents the government's position on this matter, fails our national interest test. I refute this argument and seek the House's unified support for the government's motion.

Those resting their position on this argument should think first that Canada's security, and that of the people we represent, is in fact one of the most important national interests we are seized with. The longevity of Canada's pluralistic peace is born from our collective ability to uphold the freedom from persecution that in turn enables the freedoms of speech, opportunity and personage on which the prosperity of our nation rests.

In this context, the question of national interest as it relates to the motion first rests on whether there is a clear threat to the national security of Canada's people. While it may be difficult for any of us to watch the manifesto video left by Michael Zehaf-Bibeau, it clearly shows that attacks by radicalized jihadi ISIL sympathizers have in fact happened on our own soil, even in this very place that I speak today. While this alone should be evidence enough of this threat to our national security, the leadership of ISIL has sent out clear directions calling upon its followers to kill Canadians. ISIL's leadership is on record as stating:

If you can kill a disbelieving American or European – especially the spiteful and filthy French – or an Australian, or a Canadian, or any other disbeliever ... then rely upon Allah and kill him in any manner or way however it may be.

Further, the footprint of ISIL working within our country to recruit followers is also evident, with the RCMP recently laying charges against Ottawa area men who now stand accused of the same.

Beyond this clear and direct threat to our country, in which this conflict poses a unique interest to Canada, any so-called national interest test applied to the motion should be made within the context of the Liberal leader's opposition to the motion. He has implied that the motion does not adequately acknowledge that Canada has a role to play in confronting humanitarian crises in the world. This is false, especially given his use of the word "confront".

The humanitarian crisis caused by ISIL's atrocities will not end unless it is first confronted by the international community using force to stop its expansion. ISIL is expansionist. We have seen the rapid growth of the territory it has taken by force quickly increase. Its adherents seek to expand ISIL's territory in order to establish a so-called caliphate, which would subjugate more of humanity to their warped, wrong and insulting interpretation of Islam and would also enable seizure of assets, which are used to fund and sustain its recruitment and military efforts. Simply put, if ISIL is left to expand its territory unchecked, the scope and severity of the humanitarian crisis it causes in its region, and the attacks it plans on foreign soil, will also continue to increase.

When paired with the acknowledgement that ISIL and its radicalized jihadi sympathizers have in fact carried out attacks against Canadians and have made direct threats to the security of our nation, saying that Canada should only have a humanitarian aid role in the international effort to contain ISIL is akin to saying that it is not in our nation's interest to prevent assault before it happens, rather to stand by and watch it occur and be satisfied in providing food, shelter and victim support services only after the crime has been committed.

This is not to downplay the need for Canada to continue its strong record of funding and delivering humanitarian aid to ISIL's victims. To date, Canada's aid support for the victims of ISIL has provided food to 1.7 million people, shelter and relief supplies to 1.26 million, improved access to education opportunities for up to 500,000 children, and provided psychosocial support and other services for 35,000 women and girls who have experienced gender-based violence in the region. In addition to degrading ISIL's ability to expand and entrench its territory, the military component of the motion allows for Canada's aid to flow to more areas and allows for more accountability and security of aid workers.

### *Government Orders*

It should be clear to all of us that, as the Prime Minister discussed, this debate should not be about choosing between fighting the so-called Islamic State and helping its victims. Rather, to truly confront this humanitarian crisis, we need to do both.

The opposition has implied the motion does not present a clear mission and a clear role for Canada. This is also false. The motion enables a mission to work with our coalition allies to degrade, destabilize and weaken ISIL's position in the Middle East. Under this objective, the Royal Canadian Air Force has played a significant role.

● (1840)

Our special forces have increased the capability of Iraqi security forces to combat ISIL, including their ability to better plan, mount and execute operations against ISIL with increasing confidence and precision. Recently, Iraqi forces have made several advances, for example recapturing Tikrit. As Iraqi forces do not yet have the capability to conduct large-scale offences without coalition support, our continued support in the region is critical.

There is a clear and defined scope for our special forces. They are not allowed to operate in a combat role and are not to seek out combat activities. However, if members of our special forces are fired upon, they will fire back. Our special operations forces are working in an advise and assist role for Iraqi security forces and the Kurdish peshmerga. This is not a role they could undertake outside of Iraq.

With regard to the need for expansion of this mission into Syria, ISIL has been consolidating and moving some of its heavier equipment into Syria because of the significant impact that coalition air strikes have had on ISIL operations in Iraq. Given the threat ISIL poses to our country and the atrocities it has committed, we cannot allow ISIL to have safe refuge anywhere in the world.

Our coalition partners recognize that Canada is well placed to support the coalition objective to counter ISIL's power base in Syria, specifically by utilizing our CP-140 Aurora aerial surveillance, our CC-150 Polaris refuelling craft and our CF-18 air strikes.

To be clear, with regard to the involvement of the Assad regime, we will not seek its permission to conduct the mission outlined in front of us today. Given the request for military assistance from the Iraqi government in its fight against ISIL, the United States is arguing the collective self-defence of Iraq as the basis for operations in the area. The United States has reported to the United Nations that it is taking the necessary and proportionate military action in Syria in order to eliminate the ongoing threat to Iraq on the basis that Syria is unwilling and unable to prevent ISIL from staging operations and conducting attacks into Iraq from Syrian territory.

*Government Orders*

As the U.S. has done, Canada will report to the UN Security Council that Canada is operating in Syria on the basis of collective self-defence, pursuant to article 51 of the United Nations charter. After waffling back and forth on his personal knowledge and personal position on this mission, including making a phallic joke about the role of the Canadian air force, the Liberal leader has also said, "...that the case for deploying our forces must be made openly and transparently, based on clear and reliable, dispassionately presented facts". It is worth noting the irony of this statement, given that our government has improved upon the abysmal record the Liberals established on this front when they deployed the Canadian Forces to Afghanistan for a combat operation without a vote of Parliament. This shows who would not be trusted in this place on military missions.

By contrast, as we said six months ago, the government is again consulting Parliament on the extension and expansion of Operation Impact. We have provided updates on the mission to the Canadian public. As we have done over the last six months, we will constantly evaluate Canada's role in the region, which is why we have put a clear end date on the expansion of the mission in this motion. This is the essence of transparency.

As for treating the knowledge of ISIL's rape of thousands of women; genocide; beheadings; persecution of religious minorities, journalists, aid workers and LGBTQ; treatment of women as subhuman; and the encouragement of attacks on Canadians as dispassionate facts, I beg to differ. We should be passionate about these things, as they are the antithesis of Canadian values. They are evil and they are wrong. Support for this motion shows that our country is not willing to explain away the nature of ISIL's barbarism or be intimidated into trying to appease an evil that has formed the core of its governance around opposing the freedoms we enjoy by murdering, raping and seeking subjugation through fear.

The risks that we ask our country's men and women in uniform to undertake should not be taken lightly. However, the targeted and defined mission that has the capability to degrade a clear and direct threat to our country, both to its people and pluralistic peace, is the reason many choose to serve our country in the first place. It would be easier for us to turn a blind eye to these facts. However, as we head toward the 150th anniversary of the birth of our nation, we should not take the peace and security we enjoy as Canadians for granted, trading history's proof of what is right and wrong for a Liberal academic exercise, so that we become complacent in protecting its very existence.

In closing, those who have fought for our country in years past have left both a legacy of peace and a clear call to future generations of Canadians. We must always recognize and confront threats to our country's people, values and peace. We stand so charged today. Let us not fail in our choice on how to respond.

• (1845)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Tarik Brahma (Saint-Jean, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech given by the Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification. I am very surprised every time a member uses the argument that Daesh represents a clear and direct threat to Canada. Let us look at the example of Martin Couture-Rouleau, who was responsible for the attack in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu. The

reason why he was unable to go to Iraq or establish connections with Daesh is that he did not speak Arabic. He tried for several months to make contact with Daesh but did not succeed. He was so frustrated that he could not go and fight that he committed a desperate act with a car and a knife. That is certainly not the equipment typically used by a terrorist group.

My colleague spoke about a clear and direct attack on Canada. I would like her to explain this contradiction.

[*English*]

**Hon. Michelle Rempel:** Mr. Speaker, let me be perfectly clear. No one on this side of the House will ever stand in this place and try to rationalize or conduct an academic exercise on the root causes of terrorism, or perhaps murdering a Canadian officer is not terrorism, maybe, sometimes, sort of.

It is terrorism. It is wrong. It is a direct threat to our country, and we are acting.

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have a chance to put a question to the minister of state. It has been clear in this debate that all sides of the House see ISIL as a security threat, and want to talk about how to be the most effective in addressing that threat.

The Liberals are strongly for Canada being part of the coalition against ISIL, and the question is how to do that in a way that is in the Canadian national interest. We are clear that it is not with an endless mission to bomb in Syria and potentially strengthen the menacing Bashar al-Assad, who kills his own people. We are looking for a way that we can really contribute.

The trainers are doing such important work in strengthening the Kurdish forces so that they can protect their people and their areas, and take those areas back. It is mystifying to me why the government's motion does not include doing more with training, rather than bombing in Syria and all of the consequences of that.

DFAIT is clear that military operations are a key component defeating ISIL. We agree with that, and the trainers are a part of that. Ultimately, it is only political reconciliation and government inclusiveness that will determine Iraq's stability in the future. Therefore, a political solution is critical to degrading ISIL and stabilizing the state. Where in the motion are—

• (1850)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** The hon. Minister of State.

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Michelle Rempel:** Mr. Speaker, I think the member's long preamble and rambling question about openness and inclusivity involving ISIL is a wonderful example for those watching today of the Liberals' lack of any sort of understanding of the gravity of the situation, and their inability to construct a coherent position.

Let me be clear. There is no middle ground to be had on this issue. There is no populist opinion to pander to, as the Liberal leader has shown over the last months, going from phallic jokes to suggesting that Canada's role involves parkas, saying that it is not our role, and embarrassing our country on front after front because of their lack of a position on this issue.

I would just appeal to my colleague opposite, who has stood in this place for many years. I know that of her own volition, she can articulate a position to understand what is right and what is wrong, and finally stand for it. She can look through the substance of this motion, which includes the training of Kurdish special forces to helping the fight against this, grow a backbone and support it.

**Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the last question was long and rambling, and I had a question for the minister. The minister talked about the barbaric acts of ISIL. One can argue that in any war there are always a lot of barbaric acts. I want to ask the minister a question, and perhaps she can talk to me later. What is the government doing to stem the flow of funds to ISIL forces? It is a good question and a legitimate one. Perhaps she will have an opportunity to answer that.

I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak to this today. I want to concentrate on the humanitarian effort, but I also want to concentrate on the our amendment to this motion and outline it for MPs in the House and those who are following this debate closely at home.

My belief is that the Conservatives have simply not been honest about this mission from day one. I believe they have misled Canadians about our soldiers being involved in ground combat and have failed to make the case for Canada's military involvement in the Iraq war. That is the premise on which I will base my comments.

Let me talk about the NDP amendment to the motion. I hope the government and the folks at home will listen closely. To me it makes sense, and I think it does to many Canadians.

We are calling on the government to end the participation of Canadian Forces in combat, air strikes, and advise and assist training in Iraq and Syria as soon as possible.

We are calling on the government to boost humanitarian aid in areas where there would be immediate lifesaving impacts, including assisting refugees with basic shelter and food needs, investing in water, sanitation, hygiene, health and education for people displaced by the fighting.

We are calling on the government to work with our allies in the region to stabilize neighbouring countries, strengthen political institutions and assisting those countries that are coping with a large influx of refugees.

We are calling on the government to provide assistance to investigate and prosecute war crimes.

We are calling on the government to increase assistance for the care and resettlement of refugees impacted by the conflict.

We are calling on the government to work to prevent the flow of foreign fighters, finances and resources to ISIL in accordance with our international obligations under United Nations Security Council resolutions 2170, 2178 and 2199.

We are calling on the government to put forward a robust plan of support for communities and institutions working on de-radicalization and counter-radicalization.

We are calling on the government to report back on the costs of the mission and humanitarian assistance provided to date on a monthly basis to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development until Canadian involvement is concluded.

We are calling on the government to continue to offer its resolute and wholehearted support to the brave men and women of the Canadian Forces who stand on guard for all of us. I am sure everyone in the House agrees on the last one.

There is a concern, which I have heard from a number of constituents over the last few days, that the Prime Minister is taking us from what we call mission creep to what I guess we could call mission leap, sort of sleepwalking Canada into a wider and ever-widening conflict without any real accountability or exit plan. The Prime Minister indicated the other day that Canada would be there until the end. That sounded like George Bush, but it does not sound like anyone on that side reads history. There is no end. Wars morph and re-morph into something else.

We just have to look at Lybia, which, arguably, is worse off now than it was when we were part of a coalition that intervened there. Afghanistan, arguably again, is not any better off for us having been there. As things change and morph, I would suggest that there really is no end.

● (1855)

The Conservatives have repeatedly misled Canadians about what is happening on the ground, from the combat role being played by our special forces to the cost of the mission, even going so far as to break the law and hiding information from the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

Let me be clear. Canada has no place in this war, and there is a better role for us to play. We should be helping save lives on the ground now, by addressing the deepening humanitarian crisis unfolding in both Syria and Iraq.

There are some unanswered questions, and these are the sorts of questions that I am beginning to get in ever larger volumes from my constituents. Contradicting statements from the Prime Minister, the Minister of National Defence and senior military officials have left my constituents and many Canadians confused about what our troops are doing in Iraq.

*Government Orders*

In October 2014, Chief of the Defence Staff General Tom Lawson told the media that the mission had evolved, while the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Defence maintained that exchanging fire with the enemy at the front lines was part of Canada's original advise and assist mission.

By refusing to call this a combat mission, questions are being raised about the effect on the risk allowance and danger pay made to members of the forces. The Conservatives have refused to provide clear answers about the criteria for success in this mission or about an exit strategy.

Despite repeated questioning from the New Democrats and the Parliamentary Budget Officer since September of last year, the government only released details of the incremental costs of the mission on February 16 of this year. The full costs of the mission are still unclear. The Parliamentary Budget Officer estimates that the full costs will be at least six times higher than the incremental costs.

What I really want to talk about today are the humanitarian needs in Iraq. It is important to give some statistics and to give people listening to this debate a really clear understanding of the humanitarian crisis that exists.

As we hear in the news every day, humanitarian conditions in Iraq continue to deteriorate. The United Nations has declared the situation the highest level of emergency. Since January of this year, an estimated 2.5 million people have been displaced, and the conditions they are living in are worsening every day.

Of the 2.5 million people displaced so far by this conflict, at least 20% have critical protection needs, including those related to trauma and sexual violence. This is compounded by the regional effects of the Syrian crisis, with neighbouring countries still trying desperately to deal with refugees and violence in Syria. Neighbouring countries that would typically host refugees from Iraq are already overwhelmed by high numbers of refugees from Syria.

Canada should continue to focus on humanitarian needs of displaced communities, including minorities that have been the worst affected, and the host communities caring for them. Food prices continue to rise throughout the region, particularly in Iraq.

Children are disproportionately affected by armed conflict and by displacement. Canada should increase its focus on the welfare for children. Over 70% of internally displaced children remain out of schools across Iraq. Over half a million children between the ages of 6 and 17 are not accessing education services.

What are the immediate needs? They are water, sanitation and hygiene, food security, shelter, health, protection, including psychosocial support and education.

● (1900)

Where can Canada help? The New Democrats have urged the government to boost humanitarian aid in areas where there would be immediate life-saving impact, like building winterized camps for refugees, water, sanitation, hygiene, health and the list goes on.

**Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly understand that NDP members will not support this mission.

However, in the first week of March, our March break week, I was in Kurdistan. I was on the ground and met with refugees. I met with young women who had been tortured at the hands of ISIL. When I asked these people what they wanted, they said that they just wanted to go home. They wanted to go home to the cities, communities and neighbourhoods they had lived in for centuries.

If we do not push ISIL out, if we do not remove it as a threat, how do we get those people back into their homes that they have had for hundreds and hundreds of years? The Yazidis, Christians and Chaldeans have all lived in these regions for years. They have no way to get back home unless ISIL is removed. Why does the NDP not understand that we have to remove the threat?

**Mr. John Rafferty:** Mr. Speaker, on the surface, that question makes sense. However, it does not make sense when it is understood that ISIL will simply morph into something else. We could bomb ISIL for the next 20 years, but other groups will take its place.

If we look at Iraq now and the fighting that is going on there, I would suggest that the American involvement originally in Iraq really solved nothing. In fact, it has formed all kinds of other groups that are now fighting.

While it makes sense if we could actually get rid of the group completely and free up those homes and homeland for people to go back to, that would be ideal, but that it is an impossibility.

We need to ensure that those who are displaced have the wherewithal to continue to raise their families, grow and live and, hopefully, at some point, be able to gradually get back home.

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my friend from Thunder Bay—Rainy River noted that I had so much to say I never got to put my question the last time I rose. It is true that this is such a complex issue that it is difficult to condense into a minute. However, sometimes it is the journey and not the destination that is the point. Now I will have a chance to ask the question I was planning for the member across the aisle.

The senior diplomats at Foreign Affairs believe that political reconciliation, good governance, inclusiveness and these political solutions are very important, if not more important than military solutions. However, that is missing completely in the motion and in any of the discussion from the Conservative benches.

What does my colleague suggest in the way of actions that Canada could take to help change the political climate in that area so there can be long-term peace and stability?

● (1905)

**Mr. John Rafferty:** Mr. Speaker, it is a good question. We do not need to be one of the leaders in war. We need to be one of the leaders in reconciliation. We need to be one of the leaders in terms of humanitarian aid. We need to be one of the leaders in terms of war crimes. We need to be one of the leaders that moves forward to ensure that stability can get back into the region, but not through arms, not through weapons, not through war and, quite frankly, not through killing.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak in support of this important motion concerning Canada's continuing response to the situation in Iraq.

As we have heard, the terrorist organization, the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIL, has killed thousands of innocent people, seized significant portions of Iraqi territory over the last year, and threatens to further destabilize the region. In fact, were it not for the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces and our coalition allies, it would continue to spread.

In early March I visited the Kurdistan region of Iraq as part of a delegation of One Free World International. This was my second visit to the region and it gave me a first-hand view of the ISIL attacks. I met with government officials, peshmerga troops, victims, and refugees. I personally heard their stories. Young women who had been captured and brutalized by ISIL shared their horrific experiences with us and reinforced why this barbaric group must be stopped.

Amid the unfolding crisis, Canada is committed to helping the Iraqi people and assisting Iraq's security forces. As the direct result of military action by Canada and our coalition allies, ISIL's alarming spread and expansion has stopped and it is currently, thankfully, on the defensive. However, we cannot back down. We need to continue degrading ISIL until it is no longer a threat not only to the region but to Canada. Doing so is not only a moral imperative, but it is also a continuation of the strong leadership role Canada has taken in many international operations. From responding to natural disasters to defending unarmed populations, our nation's interventions are guided, in part, by our moral compass and our determination to assist those in need.

The moral imperative we face in this mission is clear. The death cult, ISIL, has declared war on Canada. It has called explicitly for attacks against Canadians. The savage brutality of ISIL is one that requires us to act. It is military and expansionist in its scope. It is genocidal and merciless. It disproportionately targets—and this is one of the most disgraceful parts of it—religious minorities, women, and anyone who disagrees with its savagery. This is not a distant fight that we can debate in the abstract. This is not an enlightening philosophical examination of our role in the world. This is a fight that is very real and it is right here at home. These terrorists hate our society and the Canadian traditions of freedom, democracy, and the rule of law.

ISIL has called for attacks against Canadians. It has called for attacks in our streets against innocent bystanders with the deliberate intent of making us all feel unsafe. It is doing this by preying on those who are vulnerable, on our most impressionable, on the isolated and the young, through its network of disgusting propaganda, and turning them against us.

This is the nature of the evil we face. There is no reasoning with an evil like ISIL. We are not sitting down to have tea with its members. There is no reasoning with a death cult that wants to massacre, rape, and pillage the developed world. We cannot condescendingly dismiss this as not our fight. ISIL has declared war on us. It has called for attacks on us. It has inspired attacks on us.

●(1910)

There has already been blood spilled in Canadian streets because of ISIL. We cannot say that is not our fight. We owe that to all of those who have been affected by this death cult. We owe that to all of those who fear for their sons and daughters being brainwashed by ISIL propaganda. We owe that to those who live under the tyranny of ISIL right now.

I can assure the members of the opposition who have suggested that we refocus our efforts on humanitarian aid that there is, indeed, a strong role for Canada in providing humanitarian aid in response to this very troubling situation. When I visited the Kurdistan region, I was told by several officials that Canada was an absolute leader in providing humanitarian aid, and they were very thankful. In particular, they paid tribute to our ambassador to Iraq, His Excellency Bruno Saccomani, for the leadership role he has played in working with them. We should be very proud of that.

Our ability to provide food, education, and shelter to those in need can only be done effectively if ISIL is pushed back. I heard that again from the government officials. Yes, there is an Iraqi security force, but we cannot give this fight to it alone.

Canada has the capacity to make a difference in this fight, and the first six months of this mission have demonstrated that. ISIL continues to be on the defensive, which is a welcome new trend. ISIL's recent attempts to regain territory in northern and central Iraq both failed as its onslaughts were successfully fended off by our coalition. By keeping ISIL out of these areas, we are saving lives. We know the difference it makes, because we know so well what ISIL is doing.

We have all heard about mass executions, and I heard that first-hand on my recent visit. We have all heard about the rape and sexual violence. I heard that from brave young women who told me their stories. We have all heard about the horrors that ISIL wages. We have discussed these already in this very place. This is why we cannot let ISIL have a base of operation from which it is unchallenged. ISIL cannot have a safe haven.

The last six months in Iraq have shown that our coalition has the capability to counter this evil head-on. We have decided to join our allies, who have been attacking ISIL in Syria without resistance from the Syrian government. The United States and other coalition partners have had six months of experience attacking ISIL targets in Syria. We will conduct air strikes against ISIL in Syria on the same legal and operational basis as our allies have been doing.

ISIL fighters and equipment have been moving freely across the Iraq-Syria border. ISIL has been consolidating and moving some of its heavier equipment into Syria because of the significant impact that the coalition air strikes have had on ISIL operations in Iraq. We have had success attacking ISIL targets in Iraq, and we will now expand to where ISIL is consolidating.

*Government Orders*

The Canadian Armed Forces record on the world stage is truly impressive. The men and women who serve our military continue to demonstrate their skill and dedication. Thanks to the readiness and agility of the Canadian Armed Forces, Canada is able to provide strong leadership and support to the international community.

It is because of our commitment to promoting international peace and security that we are assisting the people of Iraq. That is why I am proud to stand in the House tonight to support the government's motion for our continued role in helping people around the world who need our help and support. Canada is a world leader. We have so much to be proud of, and there is much more that we need to do.

God bless the people of Iraq and Syria as they go through the terrible situation that they are dealing with. Canada will always stand with them.

• (1915)

**Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the sound of defeat, the sound of another Vietnam war. It is clear those wars are lost. The government lost the Afghanistan war. Now it is another defeat. It is clear.

One of the problems, if we do not attack the first problem, is the corruption of the Iraqi government. We do not attack the co-operation between Saudi Arabia and Qatar and the Islamic State. There is no possibility to win this war with only military attacks.

The government clearly does not understand one important point: that one important part of the Sunni population of Iraq supports the terrorist organization. That is the problem. Why does the population support the terrorist group? That is the problem.

I listened carefully. I am interested in a clear response.

**Mr. Brad Butt:** Mr. Speaker, from my personal experience in actually meeting with victims of these very vicious attacks in Iraq and listening to their stories, all I can say is that they were only attacked, raped, and brutalized because they were women. They were only attacked, raped, and brutalized because they were Christian, or Chaldean, or Yazidi, or any of the other religious minorities that had lived in Iraq for centuries with no difficulty. They got on with their lives and raised their families, generation after generation.

We are there to support our fellow human beings who are being viciously attacked by this barbaric cult. That is our role. I am proud our government is standing up for these people and helping them out.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think we need to be very clear on the point that voting against this resolution does not mean supporting ISIL. The government tries to give the impression that there is no other option and no other choice and that those who do not vote for this motion are supporting ISIL.

I have news for the government. We in the Liberal Party and, I believe, Canadians as a whole do not support ISIL. Their barbaric, revolting actions that they take against humanity are abhorrent and should be acted on, where we can.

The issue is the manner in which the government seems to want to bring Canada more and more into a situation without any clarity, end game, or anything of that nature. The Prime Minister's Office, the

Minister of National Defence, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs have not been transparent and open with Canadians on this mission.

I have a question for the member. We have a wonderful Kurdish community that I met with just last weekend. Its members have thoughts in terms of their role. What does this member believe their role could be and how Canada might be able to enhance the Kurds' role?

**Mr. Brad Butt:** Mr. Speaker, first, this is coming from the party that took us into Afghanistan and never had a debate in the House of Commons on that. There was never a debate in the House of Commons like we are having tonight.

Second, I am glad the hon. member met with members of the Kurdish community. I did, too, last Friday, with the Minister of National Defence. They said that they want Canada there protecting their people. They want us to do more. They want our military presence there. They support Canada's involvement in fighting ISIL. They made it extremely clear.

Only the Liberal Party can have it both ways. Liberal members can pretend they support these things, and vote against them. We are taking action. We are standing up for the people in Iraq and Syria who have suffered at the hands of this barbaric cult. We will continue to work with our coalition allies to do the right thing to make sure people can live in peace and freedom in their home countries.

• (1920)

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise to take part in this important debate. I want to make it very clear, because the opposition does not seem to understand, that we are debating this today because jihadi terrorists have declared war on Canada and our allies. That is why we are here today and why this debate is taking place. They have specifically targeted Canada and have urged their supporters to attack "disbelieving" Canadians "in any manner". They said they should do that to make us feel insecure in our homes.

I want to take another second to reiterate something that a number of members have talked about. This is what the so-called spokesperson for the Islamic State said:

If you can kill a disbelieving American or European—especially the spiteful and filthy French—or an Australian, or a Canadian, or any other disbeliever from the disbelievers waging war, including the citizens of the countries that entered into a coalition against the Islamic State, then rely upon Allah, and kill him in any manner....

That is what this brutal group has said. Those bone-chilling statements are exactly why I am very proud to be supporting this government and this Prime Minister as we move forward with another motion to do even more in the fight against the Islamic State. As has been mentioned by a number of speakers already, one of the most important things a government can do is protect its citizens, and that is what I believe this motion would do.



*Government Orders*

We have seen first hand that this is not a problem in a faraway land, or as the Leader of the Opposition said, that it is someone else's war. That is simply not true. On October 20, Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent lost his life at the hands of an Islamic State-inspired terrorist. On October 22, Corporal Nathan Cirillo was shot as he stood on guard at the National War Memorial. He was killed by an Islamic State-inspired terrorist simply for wearing the uniform of a member of the Canadian Armed Forces.

That is why Canada is not sitting on the sidelines, as the Liberals and the NDP would have us do, and that is why we are very proud of the fact that we are part of this international coalition to push back and save the people in this region against the Islamic State.

It is, of course, very important that we fight terrorism and the ideologies that drive people to engage in violent extremism both at home and abroad, and I am proud that this government has been succeeding on both fronts. I want to speak just a bit about what we are doing here at home.

Our government introduced Canada's first counterterrorism strategy. It has four pillars: prevent, detect, deny resources, and respond. We also passed the Combating Terrorism Act, which made it illegal to travel for terrorist purposes. This is important legislation, because we have recently seen the phenomenon of westerners, including Canadians, travelling to Iraq and Syria to join in the fight with the Islamic State.

We also passed the Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act, which allows the government to revoke citizenship from dual nationals who engage in the traitorous act of taking up arms against the brave men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces or from those who are convicted of terrorist offences. Shockingly, the leader of the Liberal Party suggests that it is not a Canadian value to revoke the citizenship or even the passport of a dual national who takes up arms against a Canadian or who commits a terrorist act. That is what the leader of the Liberal Party thinks.

On this side of the House, we find it completely unacceptable that we would share the gift of Canadian citizenship with anyone who thinks that the way to solve a political disagreement is by capturing people and cutting off their heads or capturing people and putting them in cages and lighting them on fire. That is not what we stand for, and that is one of the other reasons we are so engaged in this fight. These are barbaric actions, and we will continue to do our part.

• (1925)

We also introduced the protection of Canada from terrorists and recently introduced the anti-terrorism act, 2015. This act is important for a number of reasons. It would update the no-fly list, which would give our partners better power and better authority to ensure that our airlines are safe. It would criminalize those who would seek to promote terrorist activity, such as with the videos I spoke about earlier. We know that the Islamic State uses videos to encourage people to commit terrorist acts in countries around the world, including Canada. It leads to their radicalization. Under the bill, that would become a criminal offence. It would give our law enforcement partners, those we task with keeping our country and our communities safe, important new tools so that they could do that job. It would enhance oversight and would include judicial

authorization for the new authorities we would give these security agencies to keep us and Canadians safe.

We have also heard and understand that it is very important that we also address the humanitarian impact of ISIL in this region. Canadians have said this and our government believes this. That is why we have been working with United Nations agencies and agencies such as the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and other non-governmental organizations in the area to provide assistance. What does this assistance provide? It has provided food for up to 1.7 million people and shelter and relief supplies for 1.26 million people. It has also improved access to education opportunities for up to 500,000 children.

Finally, I want to take a moment to speak directly to the people of my riding of Oak Ridges—Markham. Obviously the decision to send the Canadian Forces into harm's way is one that is very difficult. Many speakers have already highlighted the fact that it is one of the most difficult decisions a member of Parliament or a government will ever make. I want to say very sincerely and directly to my constituents that I believe that it is very important for Canada to continue to play a role to ensure the safety and security of our country and our community.

Throughout the great history of my riding and the communities that make up Oak Ridges—Markham, mainly Markham, Whitchurch-Stouffville, Richmond Hill, and King City, we have always been ready to answer the call to service both at home and abroad. Our local regiments, the Governor General's Horse Guards and the Queen's York Rangers, have always been prepared and have always answered the call when conflict was brought to our shores or when our assistance was needed abroad. I am very proud of the fact that we have such a rich history.

In my riding we have very important non-governmental organizations, churches, and community groups that are willing and ready and are always providing assistance to people in need.

While I understand that not all of my constituents might necessarily agree with the actions we have taken or the actions we will continue to take, I do know that all of my constituents agree that it is very important that we do whatever we can to ensure the safety and security of our nation and our community. I believe that what we are doing here and what we have done over the last six months is in the very great tradition of Canada as an important ally, a reliable partner, and a nation that seeks peace but is always willing to fight anyone who would seek to destroy what generations of Canadians have built here.

It is with that that I say to my constituents and the House that I am very proud to support the motion. I hope that the opposition will reflect on that and the dangers to Canada and will do the right thing and support the motion to support the extension of the mission.

*Government Orders*

• (1930)

**Mr. Tarik Brahmi (Saint-Jean, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I attended the funeral of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent. He was the victim of a despicable act, but I do not understand how the parliamentary secretary can pretend that this despicable act had a direct connection to the group Daesh, which specifically targeted Canada. The reason Martin Couture-Rouleau committed that despicable act was that he was not able to make any connection with the Daesh group. The reason he was not able to make any connection, although he tried for several months, was that he did not understand or speak Arabic. He was so frustrated that he committed this crazy act and randomly took an innocent member of our proud Canadian Forces. How can the member explain this contradiction?

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat confused by the member's question. Warrant Officer Vincent was targeted by an individual who committed a terrorist act on Canadian soil. He killed a member of the Canadian Armed Forces. Two days later, another Canadian Armed Forces member, not 500 metres from this place, was gunned down by another radicalized terrorist.

These are people who have declared war on Canada. These are people who have suggested that other people should kill not only Canadians but our allies. It is for that reason that Canada has taken the steps we have taken to ensure that Canadians can be safe not only at home but abroad.

I would ask the member to reflect on some of the things we have talked about here today and some of the stories we have been told, in particular what we heard earlier from the member for Mississauga—Streetsville. These are people who are asking for our help, and in the great tradition of Canada, we will respond with that help.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, just to be very clear, the Liberal Party of Canada has never been opposed to deploying our armed forces for combat when it clearly serves Canada's national interest.

Military missions designed to uphold that interest must have transparent objectives and a responsible plan to achieve them. To give an example, Canada has a clear interest in training Iraqi forces to fight and destroy ISIL. We can and should do this training away from the front lines, as our allies have been doing. That is an example of the type of thing Canada can excel in. There is no doubt about that, and Canadians as a whole would support that sort of action.

What the government does not seem to recognize is that it has not been straightforward with Canadians. Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister explain to the House why, for example, the Prime Minister was evasive on the issue of the original combat role Canadian soldiers were going to be putting themselves into? At one point he said no, and then we—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Order, please. The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal position on this is really obscure. What the member just said is that the Liberals support deploying the Canadian Armed Forces to the region, but they voted against the motion that sent them there six months ago. That is what the Liberals are saying now.

This is what I think the Liberal Party understands. The Liberals understand that Canadians realize that this is very important. It is important to our national security that we are there, and it is important to Canadian safety and security that we be there. The Liberals understand that they are on the wrong side of Canadians and now are trying to pretend that they are on the right side and are trying to find all kinds of ways around it. They want to deploy the soldiers but not that far and not the way we have done it.

Here is the reality. The Liberals have an opportunity next week to vote in favour of a motion that sends Canadian troops and that continues to expand our mission in an area where we can protect Canada's national interests and can provide the best opportunity to save millions of lives. I hope the Liberals will reflect on that and will actually join us in this, as opposed to talking out of both sides of their mouths.

• (1935)

**Mr. Peter Braid (Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me to rise in the House this evening to speak to and support our government's motion to expand and extend our campaign against ISIL in Iraq.

This so-called Islamic State has threatened and attacked those who stand up to their barbaric form of Islam across the globe. It has also indicated that it is specifically targeting Canada and its allies. It has made it clear that Canada is a target. Why? It is for the same reason it targets most of humanity: in ISIL's view, anyone who does not accept its perverse interpretation of religion should be killed.

That is why we are in Iraq with our allies. It is to fight the threat that ISIL poses not just to the region but to Canada as well.

Our motion clearly lays out precisely what military activities we will be undertaking in Iraq to degrade and destabilize this so-called Islamic State. I would like to go into some detail about the contributions being made by Canadian air assets.

To date, our very capable CF-18 Hornets have conducted over 416 sorties, resulting in the destruction of vehicles, heavy weapons, checkpoints, buildings, and bunkers. By damaging or destroying assets like these, the Canadian Armed Forces are not only degrading ISIL's combat capabilities and preventing ISIL fighters from establishing safe havens but also enabling Iraqi forces to go on the offensive. Ultimately, it will be for the Iraqi security forces to bring sufficient pressure to bear on ISIL and eliminate the grave threat that it represents.

Our CP-140 Auroras, outfitted with advanced imaging systems, radar, and other sensors, have conducted over 116 reconnaissance missions, collecting the critical intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance data that is used to identify and strike targets accurately as well as to assess battle damage. The modernized Aurora really is a cutting-edge platform. The information that this aircraft collects not only enhances the effectiveness of air strikes but also helps avoid collateral damage by ensuring that targets are limited to military objectives. In fact, our Auroras have made crucial contributions to what is considered the most precise close air support campaign in history. This is a specific capability that the U.S. views as extremely useful for Canada to provide in the fight against ISIL and Syria.

*Government Orders*

Lastly, the CC-150 Polaris refueller has conducted over 105 sorties, delivering more than six million pounds of fuel to coalition aircraft. By delivering fuel to fighters in the air, it acts as a force multiplier by allowing these aircraft to lengthen their sorties and fly further into the battle space. Our Polaris is helping the coalition to maintain pressure on ISIL throughout Iraq.

Moreover, our special operations forces, who are so incredibly capable, are on the ground. They are working hard to advise and assist the Iraqi forces and make them more effective. They are increasing their confidence and ability to plan, mount, and execute operations against ISIL, and they are making a real difference in helping to professionalize the Iraqi security forces.

Any operational mission carries with it a degree of risk. We all recognize that, but I am confident that the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces are as prepared as they can be to face these challenges. They are rigorously trained prior to deployment overseas, equipped to the highest standard, and operate within specific rules of engagement that mitigate risks where feasible. They are also provided with the required intelligence and legal advice to ensure that all Canadian Armed Forces activities comply with international law and Canadian law.

● (1940)

Moreover, risk to Canadian personnel is also alleviated by a dedicated coalition personnel recovery capability, which includes a high-readiness combat search and rescue capacity prepared to respond should it prove necessary. Thank goodness we have such brave, courageous, highly skilled, professional Canadian Armed Forces members.

However, there is no either/or between military action and humanitarian aid. As members know, military operations enable the flow of humanitarian aid and other assistance programming by creating secure conditions on the ground. In order for aid to be delivered effectively, we need security. Therefore, along with our military contribution to assist the people and the Government of Iraq, Canada has taken significant steps to address the suffering of Iraqi civilians.

In fact, Canada is at the forefront of international efforts in Iraq. We have committed funding for humanitarian aid, stabilization, and security programming to Iraq over the past year. This support includes over \$67.4 million to address humanitarian needs in Iraq, \$15 million to strengthen front-line security measures and combat the threat of foreign fighters and violent extremism, and \$10 million to address sexual violence and additional human rights abuses perpetrated by ISIL—human rights abuses the likes of which we have never seen.

All of this support is helping to feed 1.7 million people in Iraq, providing shelter and relief supplies to 1.25 million people, and giving some education to over half a million children.

Iraq has also been designated as a partner country. This means that it qualifies for bilateral assistance to enable it to meet long-term development objectives and build resilience to withstand the ongoing conflict. We are working swiftly to deliver new development assistance programming in Iraq, both to address short-term

needs during the continuing crisis and to contribute to support and stability over the long term.

However, ISIL is a group that decries modern civilization. It equally abhors anything that does not accord with its twisted world view. As part of its relentless campaign to eradicate culture, over the last few weeks we have witnessed the destruction of the 3,000-year-old Syrian city of Nimrud; the 7th century statues from the ancient city of Nineveh, housed in a museum in Mosul; and, most recently, the bulldozing of the ancient city of Hatra, which dated to the 2nd or 3rd century BC.

The head of UNESCO has declared that this “...deliberate destruction of cultural heritage constitutes a war crime.”

ISIL is not nearly content to threaten the present and the future of the people in the Middle East; it is determined to erase their culture and their past in an attempt to revise history.

In conclusion, this is why I am supporting our government's motion, which provides for military support to degrade and destabilize ISIL as well as significant humanitarian aid in the Canadian tradition to ensure that displaced people are taken care of.

I would ask that all of my colleagues in the House support this very important motion.

● (1945)

**Mr. Tarik Brahmi (Saint-Jean, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned the special forces helping Iraqi security forces. He mentioned the term “advise and assist”. When I received my basic military training in the French army in 1992, it was clearly explained to me what the role of the special forces was. The role of special forces is to carry out special operations.

I wonder if the member opposite really believed the Prime Minister when he said that they would only advise and assist. Did he believe that the Canadian Forces would only advise and assist Iraqi security forces, which, by the way, are not even aware sometimes that they are being trained?

**Mr. Peter Braid:** Mr. Speaker, it is clear that it is our very skilled and highly capable CF-18 pilots who are in a combat role. Our special operations forces, who quite literally are among the best soldiers in the world, are on the ground not in a combat role but in an advise and assist role. Should our special operations forces be fired upon, of course they would be expected to defend themselves.

However, that is the purpose of those two aspects of our military mission. It is very clear.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the member were to go onto *National Newswatch* right now, he would see an interesting article. The article headline is “Syrian airstrikes could help Al-Qaeda”, which I thought was an interesting headline.

Like ISIL, Al-Qaeda was, and still is, a threat to the world in terms of its terrorist behaviour. I would ask the hon. member to provide a comment on that.

*Government Orders*

Second, over the last number of years, Syria has literally had almost half of its population displaced because of the current regime. To what degree does the hon. member believe that the Government of Canada has done its homework in regard to everything from the compassionate side of dealing with refugees to the issue on which I posed a question to the member and his caucus earlier with regard to how we might be able to best fight ISIL? One of the ways might be to better support the Kurds.

**Mr. Peter Braid:** Mr. Speaker, on that final point, we are providing significant support to the Kurds.

This mission has been and will continue to be a mission against the depravity of ISIL, whether ISIL is in Iraq or in Syria. This is a cult of violence, and the purpose of our mission is to degrade and destabilize ISIL.

The power base of ISIL, the nerve centre of ISIL, is in Syria. That is why it is appropriate at this time that the government consider extending our mission, which is clearly against ISIL, into areas of geography within Syria. This is for the express purpose of destabilizing and degrading ISIL, because ISIL represents a threat not only to Iraq but to Canada's security. That is why Canada is participating. That is why our forces are part of this important coalition effort.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the motion the government moved to ask the House of Commons to recognize that the terrorist group called the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or the Islamic State, has called upon its members numerous times to attack Canada and Canadians. I would also like to express my support for our government's decision to extend Canada's military mission in Iraq.

The Islamic State is a serious threat not only to the security of the Middle East, but also to international peace and security. The group has caused a serious humanitarian and security crisis in Iraq and neighbouring countries. It has displaced over 2 million people. It persecutes religious and ethnic minorities and has killed thousands of innocent men, women and children. It has committed acts of incredible barbarity by beheading journalists and humanitarian workers on camera and burning a Jordanian pilot to death.

The Islamic State's behaviour is sending us a clear message. By destroying the remnants of ancient civilizations, it is showing its contempt for culture and history. Every time it enslaves a woman, it shows its contempt for human equality. Every time it kills an innocent person, it shows its contempt for the sanctity of life.

• (1950)

[*English*]

ISIL claims to have established a caliphate in the territory it controls. It sees this as a means to legitimize its rule, enact sharia law and provide a rallying pride to foreign fighters who believe it is their duty to live under the aegis of the Caliph. They are extremists who believe that anyone who follows a different interpretation of Islam, including moderate Muslims, are all apostates. ISIL seeks to eradicate all people thus identified in the Middle East. We have seen extremely disturbing examples of the atrocities it has committed

in the territory it controls, including the death of more than 10,000 civilians.

[*Translation*]

This terrorist group has called for direct attacks against Canada and Canadians. It inspired and applauded the terrible tragedies in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu and Ottawa and was delighted by the attacks against innocent people in Sydney, Paris, Copenhagen and, just recently, Tunis. Its propaganda incites terrorists to attack civilians and encourages potential fighters to join its fighters on the battlefields of Iraq and Syria.

It is clear that the Islamic State poses a real threat to Canada and Canadians. Our government, together with our allies, has resolved to address this threat directly. We want to respond with force and show that, individually and collectively, we have the necessary determination to significantly degrade their operations.

Last August, the Royal Canadian Air Force began transporting essential military equipment provided by our allies to the Iraqi forces. In total, 25 Hercules transport flights and one Globemaster strategic airlifter delivered more than 700 tonnes of equipment, which was desperately needed.

In September, at the NATO summit held in Wales, the Prime Minister announced that Canada's special operations forces would be deployed as part of an advise and assist mission and would provide tactical and operational advice to improve the effectiveness of the Iraqi forces and the Kurdish peshmerga on the ground.

Then in early October, the government moved a motion asking Parliament to support the extension and expansion of Canada's military contribution to the Government of Iraq.

[*English*]

Canada's current military efforts are part of Operation Impact. This mission is composed of approximately 600 Canadian Armed Forces personnel and it includes a strike force of six CF-18 Hornet fighters, with associated aircrew and logistical support elements, which conducts air strikes against ISIL targets in Iraq in co-operation with coalition partners. An aerial enabling force, comprised of a CC-150 Polaris aerial refueller, up to two CP-140 Aurora aerial surveillance aircraft, and an associated support crew, as part of a key coalition reconnaissance and support capability, contributes to situational awareness, command and control, and logistical support as well as assist with coalition air strikes against ISIL targets in Iraq. The contributions of the Canadian Armed Forces have not only been highly effective but are also highly valued by the coalition.

*Government Orders*

Over the past six months, the coalition has seen real signs of progress. Through the aerial campaign, the coalition has destroyed ISIL targets in central Iraq and north and northwest of Baghdad in areas that are both controlled and contested by ISIL. These efforts have reduced ISIL's freedom of movement and territorial gain. Thanks in part to Canada's military efforts, ISIL's ability to raise funds for its reign of terror has taken a major hit. Iraqi forces have wrestled the city of al-Baghdadi back from ISIL control and are working to regain Fallujah. In northern Iraq, Iraqi forces are gradually taking back ground east of Mosul, where ISIL is now in a defensive posture.

● (1955)

[*Translation*]

This progress proves that the situation is improving, but there is still work to be done. More than ever, we must remain steadfast. More than ever, we must demonstrate our commitment, and more than ever we must recognize the importance of continuing this fight that will define a generation. We are combatting a radical interpretation of Islam, an interpretation that results in innocent people being subjected to unbelievable violence and that inspires terrorist threats against Canada and our citizens.

That is why our government is asking Parliament to approve an extension of the Canadian Armed Forces mission in Iraq for a maximum of 12 months, until March 30, 2016. We are also asking Parliament to approve the expansion of the scope of the mission.

As we all know, the Islamic State poses a serious threat to regional security and peace. Although the coalition has managed to stop the advance of the Islamic State, it continues to control a vast territory that covers part of Syria and Iraq. It draws its strength from its presence in these two countries. Since the coalition's air strikes have depleted its reserves and weakened its strongholds in Iraq, it has no choice but to rebuild its forces, take refuge and resupply in Syria.

If we stop the fight at the Iraq border, we will never be able to eliminate these support bases and we will never be able to eliminate this threat. That is why our government is calling on Parliament to support an extension of the air mission so that we can hit targets in Syria. We will not be alone in this mission. The United States is already carrying out air strikes in Syria, with the co-operation of Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates. We will certainly make a considerable contribution, especially if we consider our targeting capabilities with precision munitions.

[*English*]

There are those within the opposition parties who would reject such action in Syria for fear of even indirectly helping the barbaric regime of Bashar al-Assad. What the opposition MPs refuse to admit is that ISIL is a threat to Canada and Canadians and that we must therefore engage ISIL not only in Iraq, but also in Syria. We continue to hope the Assad regime will be replaced by one that respects human rights and democracy, but in the meantime, we will not allow ISIL to take advantage of the situation in Syria to further victimize people in the region and we will not allow it to continue its threats against Canada.

[*Translation*]

The terrorist group that we call the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant has asked its members to attack Canada. The Islamic State targets ethnic and religious minorities, commits crimes of sexual violence and massacres civilians. That is why we, together with our coalition partners, must deny them freedom of movement in Iraq. We must eliminate its hiding places in Syria and we must do everything in our power to put an end to the horrific violence that it is inflicting on innocent civilians.

We cannot let the hate and fanaticism of the Islamic State spread, take root in the weak and the easily influenced, and create terrorists ready to attack those who do not share their beliefs. That is why we are asking Parliament to support our government's decision, a decision that will continue to help the people of Iraq, a decision that will weaken the Islamic State's threat that looms over Iraq and Syria as well as the threat it poses to Canada, and, lastly, a decision leading to action to combat the atrocities that the Islamic State is committing in the name of a jihad that seeks to spread nothing but death.

● (2000)

**Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my distinguished colleague's presentation and I have a major problem with it. He is asking us to go and wage war on terrorists, barbaric in the extreme, I agree, but who have been created, financed and armed by our current allies, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. There is a problem here. The government is asking us to go and disarm barbaric individuals who got those arms from our so-called allies. How many times is he going to tell us that joke before we realize that we are not cannon fodder for a bunch of oil dictators?

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Mr. Speaker, that question proves that the NDP does not understand what is happening with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, and the threat that it poses here in Canada.

[*English*]

The NDP is completely disassociated from Canadians and their understanding of what is going on with ISIL. As I mentioned in my speech, ISIL presents a very clear and present danger to the people of the region in which it operates, and it presents a very clear and present danger to Canadians.

Just before Christmas, we saw the results of its threats to Canada. I do not know why the NDP will not admit that ISIL has targeted Canada. It has to account for that to Canadians.

The NDP members will have the opportunity to vote on this motion. I ask them to change their ways, be reasonable and support the motion we have put forward in Parliament.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know the member would be aware that al Qaeda was the organization that ultimately caused and precipitated the 9/11 attacks, the collapse of the twin towers, and heightened terrorism to a level that was never really recognized until that incident.

*Government Orders*

I am looking for an opinion from the member. There is a headline that I think is causing concern. I raise it just to get feedback from the member. The headline is, “Syrian air strikes could help al-Qaeda”. “Experts warn that the West’s focus on attacking ISIS is boosting its equally dangerous rival”.

As Canadians might be following the debate, or are reading or hearing what CBC is reporting, I am sure they are asking questions. Could the member provide some understanding from the Government of Canada’s perspective on that report, or does he feel there is no merit whatsoever to the report?

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Mr. Speaker, what I find very troubling about the position of the Liberals is that they would advocate, primarily, to do nothing, let the threat exist, let the violence continue, let terrorists attack Canada and do nothing.

The Liberal position, as well as the NDP position, is incomprehensible to Canadians. In fact, I believe the Liberals have only given two speeches on this topic tonight. It is an extremely important debate in the House of Commons. I believe they have only given two speeches because even they, and their MPs, do not understand their position.

Our position is very clear. It is ISIL that poses a threat, not only to the people of the region in which they operate, but also to the people in Canada.

As I mentioned in my response to a question from a previous colleague, Canada has experienced the tragic effects of ISIL reaching out to misguided Canadians, one of whom attacked Parliament and killed Nathan Cirillo and another who killed Patrice Vincent in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu.

I do not understand why the Liberals cannot see that, why they will not accept that, and why they will not push back against ISIL. Why will they not stand up and defend the interests of Canada and of Canadians?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, atrocities have been perpetrated in this world, and Boko Haram and ISIL are responsible for many of them.

Such barbaric acts can only be condemned. We have seen terrible things. A London taxi driver chose to serve his fellow humans by driving a truck to transport food to hungry people. ISIL punished him for his good deed by slitting his throat. It goes without saying that such things are reprehensible.

However, the members of this group are not the only ones. Saudi Arabia has committed atrocities too, such as sentencing a man to 1,000 lashes. Raif Badawi, whose family has sought asylum in Canada, would also like to be shown some compassion. There was a major problem when Muslim peoples learned that the American CIA had systematically tortured all of its detainees. It goes without saying that reports and information about the torture meted out by the CIA proved a powerful motivator for young Muslims to join the terrorist movement. That is dangerous. That is the worst thing that could have happened.

There is also Congo. Five million people have died there since 1998. That is more than the populations of Kuwait, Afghanistan and

Vietnam combined. Nobody is asking us to drop bombs there. No, that place is not interesting. There is no oil there, just Africans, and they are not worth much. However, Boko Haram is in Nigeria. Members of that organization have declared war on the whole world, and they kill anyone who is not with them. No exceptions. Some groups have threatened Canada and Australia, but Boko Haram believes that everyone in the world is an infidel. We are not going to Nigeria though. There are terrorists in Mali and many other places. Libya is a good example, but we are not going there. We pick and choose based on what the Americans want.

However, we are Canadians here. We do not want to be a caricature of George W. Bush. We do not want our Prime Minister to be the clone of George W. Bush. Clearly, we do not agree with them. They had promised—a promise that smacks of George W. Bush—that Canadian troops would not participate in combat. That was promised, sworn up and down. On September 30, the Prime Minister said so in the House. We now know that this is not true and that Canadian troops were on the front lines. They were directly accompanying the troops into combat. However, we have just been told that Canada will make a big change.

For 11 years, the Americans dropped a lot of bombs in Iraq. They sent in an army of 250,000. The result is that we are now forced to go back. We should perhaps realize that the military approach and bombings do not give long-term or reliable results. When the Americans withdrew from Iraq, they told the Iraqi people to be democratic and respectful of rights. Influenced by an Iranian government, they did not really turn to democracy. In light of the Iranian influence in Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Qatar created a resistance force to combat the dangerous Syrian regime that was too close to Iran and the government that was sympathetic to Iran. They created the army of the Islamic State. On that day, frankly, they did not ask us for our advice. With friends like that, who needs enemies?

● (2005)

How is it that the Islamic State, which, with about 40,000 men, is not particularly big, was able to get to the gates of Baghdad? It is quite simple. The Iraqi army, with a force of 200,000 men, did not fight. We saw 60,000 Iraqi soldiers be beaten by 800 terrorists. With odds of 1 against 75, the 75 lost. They deserted in droves, and, anyway, those 60,000 men were not 60,000 men because in the very democratic Iraq, officers commanding battalions of 500 men really have only 250. They take the salaries of the 250 phantom soldiers and put the money into their own pockets. In the Iraqi army, officers’ ranks are bought and sold. We can understand how, in the face of such corruption, Iraqi soldiers are not very motivated to fight.

*Government Orders*

There is a second problem. Not only does the Iraqi army have no interest in fighting, but Iraq's Shia population is also quite sympathetic to the Islamic State. People may well ask me what is happening: we cannot have any sympathy for barbarism. But there is barbarism on both sides of the border. People have been murdered and oppressed because they were Sunni. Sunni journalists, Sunni politicians, men and women, have been murdered by the Iraqi government. That is oppression. Christians have been oppressed by the current Iraqi government, a government that is neither democratic, nor very respectful, nor very civilized. This has led to the situation where, when the Islamic State appeared in many towns, the people were sympathetic to their cause. Bombing them is not going to stop them from being sympathetic. Perhaps they need something other than bombs.

When the machinery of government is destroyed, we see the rise of armed gangs and warlords—and, heaven knows, that machinery can so easily be destroyed in places like that, like Libya, Yemen, Iraq or Syria. Clearly, something has to be done about the situation.

Twelve years of American bombings created a new generation of young people who see the western world as a threat, not as a source of assistance, not as an example, but as an enemy who destroys everything, including water systems, power supplies and schools. Obviously they do not think we are very nice. What is more, people watch television. They see the barbaric acts of the Islamic State, but they also see the barbaric acts committed by the CIA, which tortures people. I do not need to say it. Everyone is saying it. Even the Americans themselves recognize it. That was the worst and most foolish thing they did. They created their own enemies. They provided them with free propaganda.

Of course, Canada has other more powerful weapons. Fortunately, the NDP is the historic heir, if you will, of Lester B. Pearson. We want peace and we are going to build it. We will get there not by going to war, but rather by preventing war and preventing terrorists from getting weapons. Some countries are providing them with weapons. It might be a good idea to stop that. Some countries are buying oil produced by the Islamic State in Iraq. Perhaps that needs to stop. That would be practical and useful action. In short, we need to take away their funding and their military resources; no weapons, no war. That is how we would intervene and it does not require bombing civilians.

• (2010)

This is the type of action that the NDP is going to promote. Of course, we are also going to promote food aid for all those in need. We cannot just donate a few tents and say that we are supporting the civilian population. We have to make that a priority. The Red Cross and the Red Crescent need and deserve support.

• (2015)

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member just said that we need to prioritize humanitarian assistance. I have good news for him: we have already provided a great deal of assistance.

We have already provided assistance to Syrian refugees by investing more than \$700 million, which is the sixth-largest

humanitarian aid contribution to Syrians in the world, and the largest per capita among developed countries.

We have spent nearly \$70 million to provide humanitarian assistance through the Red Cross and UN agencies for people who are displaced in Iraq as a result of ISIL. That is the fifth-largest financial contribution and the largest per capita in all of the developed world. We have already done this.

My colleague shared all of the typical left-wing anti-American conspiracy theories, and he could not stop talking about George W. Bush, who has not been president of the United States for six years. He blamed the CIA and all of the conspiracy theories.

However, I must point out that the left-wing social democratic governments in Europe, in countries like France, Holland, Belgium and Denmark, as well as the Democratic Party in the United States and the Labour Party in the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand and almost all of our allies are involved in the military campaigns.

Why do all of the mainstream social democrats abroad, in the democratic world, support our policy of military action and why are the New Democrats the only western social democratic party that is against it?

**Mr. Alain Giguère:** Mr. Speaker, it is appalling to see the Minister of National Defence in such denial.

The U.S. Senate acknowledged in a unanimous report that the CIA systematically tortured its prisoners. This is not a fabrication or a conspiracy theory; it is from a report that was crystal clear.

Like it or not, it is a fact of history: the Americans bombed Iraq for 12 years. They occupied it militarily, and now we are seeing the result of that. Now we have to go back. Maybe some day the Conservatives will understand that bombs are not the best solution. We are proposing something altogether different.

They say that food aid is good, but that some military assistance is also needed. Instead we should be making sure that people cannot get their hands on weapons or munitions. Perhaps we should be convincing some governments to keep quiet.

We need to make sure that Turkey does not become a refuge for ISIL, that people cannot go and seek medical care or sell their oil in Turkey. That would be helpful.

These are the kinds of measures we should be taking to win the war. This is certainly not what the Conservatives did in Afghanistan.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if I may, at this point I would like to reiterate something I indicated earlier today.

The Liberal Party will not support the government's efforts to deepen this combat mission and expand into Syria. It is for good reason. The government is proposing an unfocused, unending combat mission for the Canadian Armed Forces.

*Government Orders*

The Conservatives have failed to clearly articulate the mission objectives, with the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Defence offering conflicting arguments. We believe that Canada has a role to play in the campaign against ISIL. The role must serve our national interests. The mission proposed by the Prime Minister fails to meet that test.

I am wondering if the member would agree with everything that I have just stated.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Giguère:** Mr. Speaker, that is a real problem.

When I said that this feels like another Vietnam, that is a fact. Earlier the Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification said that her objective was to destabilize the government, in order to weaken its position. That will not mean victory.

The real victory will come when people no longer want to support a terrorist movement. That will be the real victory. The only thing the Conservatives are proposing right now is limiting the influence of these terrorist organizations.

As with the Vietnam War and the war in Afghanistan, this strategy does not have a clearly defined objective, and more importantly, we do not know how we will get out of this mess once we are in it.

• (2020)

[*English*]

**Mr. Corneliu Chisu (Pickering—Scarborough East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this motion. As a veteran from the war in Afghanistan against the evil of the Taliban and al Qaeda, I consider it my sacred duty to raise my voice in this debate and warn that ISIL must be stopped before it causes any more destruction and claims any more innocent lives.

Let me speak to something that seems to have been lost to so many in this debate. ISIL has called for brutal attacks on Canadians, specifically Canadian civilians. Through its propaganda network, it has already inspired attacks here on Canadian soil. Within the last year, we have buried Canadian soldiers who died on Canadian soil. One of them was mere steps from this place.

Countering ISIL is a debate that concerns each of us here. This is something that in and of itself is beyond the scope of a humanitarian mission. I urge all members in this place to support the motion in order for Canada to extend its commitment to the multinational coalition supporting the Government of Iraq in its fight against the so-called Islamic State.

We have heard much about Canada's role in Iraq, its mission and the capabilities being brought to bear by the Canadian Armed Forces. It is the result of their work that ISIL is being pushed back. ISIL is now on the defensive in nearly 25% of the areas that it previously held. While ISIL made rapid advances last year, it is now on the defensive. In fact, ISIL has not made any territorial advancement in months as the direct result of the air strikes being carried out by the Royal Canadian Air Force and coalition allies.

In northern Iraq, the Iraqi forces are gradually taking back ground east of Mosul. In western Iraq, the city of Al-Baghdadi has been reclaimed by Iraqi forces, and they are working toward regaining control of Fallujah. In central Iraq, coalition air strikes have

degraded ISIL's ability to conduct operations in those areas, and contribute to the gains made by Iraqi forces. These air strikes are saving lives.

Here is what United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had to say about air strikes:

These air strikes and military operation which was done at the request of the government of Iraq was able to help the United Nations and other actors to ... save a lot of human lives.

He also said it is clear that Islamic State militants are “a threat to international peace and security, as has already been declared by the Security Council”.

What ISIL is carrying out is a complete assault on human dignity. The atrocities that it wages are beyond reprehensible. Its actions and values are those of complete savages. This is genocidal terrorist organization. It has explicitly stated its desire for genocide. It disproportionately targets ethnic and religious minorities with its sheer brutality.

Moreover, this is an organization that seethes with hatred for women in particular. It is estimated that 7,000 Yazidi women and girls are being kept as sex slaves by ISIL. These reports are numerous and they are troubling. Young women are captured and distributed as objects among ISIL fighters.

A recent report by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights contains countless reports of abduction, rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated against women and children. The report cites several ISIL sex slaves who have escaped, including one who said that the guards raped her three times a day for three days. The UN report also contained an account of an 8- or 9-year old girl being raped openly in the hall by ISIL members in a Tal Afar school, where ISIL reportedly kept more than 100 small children. Many of the women enslaved by ISIL, according to the UN report, are forcibly married to ISIL fighters or sold as slaves in auctions. They are subjected to sexual and gender-based violence.

• (2025)

This is a brand of hatred that they want to export to Canada. This is what they are advocating for. These are the sickening values they champion, for which they will murder, for which they will behead. They have called for attacks in Canada on Canadians, which makes it very much our fight.

Through the terror network, ISIL has been able to obtain weaponry and heavy artillery. They use these heavy weapons to stake claim to a swathe of land across Iraq and into Syria within which they carry out their atrocities. They cannot be allowed to have a safe haven in Syria to carry out these atrocities freely without fear of repercussions.

This is why a humanitarian response, and if the official opposition members were to get their way, the only response, is not enough on its own.



*Government Orders*

Canada is punching above its weight in terms of humanitarian response. We are the world's sixth-largest donor for humanitarian aid to Syria, and we are the fifth-largest for Iraq. In fact, through our aid efforts, Canada has provided food for 1.7 million people in Iraq, and 1.26 million people in Iraq have received relief supplies.

Over 500,000 children have received education opportunities. We are countering ISIL through our humanitarian efforts also, but this alone does not stop the brutal savagery of ISIL. That is why our approach to countering ISIL is both humanitarian and military. We are facing the threat head on and also doing everything in our power to provide help to their victims who desperately need it.

This is not an either/or scenario. In fact, we cannot protect Canada by failing to acknowledge these threats, turning our backs and simply continuing to provide aid to those affected by ISIL's growth and expansion. ISIL must be degraded to the point where they no longer represent a threat to Canada. They are a direct threat not only to regional and international security, but a threat to the very security of Canadians right here at home. Through our military response, through the work of the brave men and women of the Royal Canadian Air Force, we are facing these threats head on and pulling our weight internationally. As Canadians, we have a moral obligation to our fellow men and women facing the onslaught of ISIL today, and a duty to protect Canadians from ISIL, who have declared war on us.

There is no splendid isolation in a troubled world, and that is why I encourage the opposition to vote in favour of this mission extension. Let us do the right thing. Let us get the job done.

**Mr. Tarik Brahmī (Saint-Jean, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly commend the dedicated work of my colleague across the aisle at the Standing Committee on National Defence.

He is an engineer; I am an engineer. He served in the Canadian Forces; I served in the French forces. Knowing his military background, I wonder how he was able to believe that in the first place, Canadian special forces were in Iraq, not to carry out special operations, but to carry out training.

He is very knowledgeable about military operations. How can he explain that Sergeant Andrew Doiron was killed in action by the very people he was supposed to be training?

**Mr. Corneliu Chisu:** Mr. Speaker, when my colleague said the special forces are there for training purposes, that is by the rules of engagement, and that is very clear. They cannot do anything else but what is mandated for them to do. My colleague must know this also.

When they are speaking about the special forces, which are training, they are training, not doing anything else. As we know, accidents can happen in the military. My profession when I was in the military is not without danger. However, I can assure the House, what we are telling Canadians is the truth, that they are for training and to assist.

• (2030)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last weekend I had the privilege to participate in a very special event that was hosted by the Kurdish Association of Manitoba. I had the opportunity to have a number of discussions with people of Kurdish heritage. The Kurdish community in Iraq can have a very significant

impact. These are the people who are fighting ISIL on the ground. One of their greatest needs is for expertise and support from Canada in different forms.

Would the member acknowledge that one of the ways we can fight ISIL is to support organizations or people such as the Kurds in Iraq who are doing the hand-to-hand fighting today against ISIL?

**Mr. Corneliu Chisu:** Mr. Speaker, I understand that my colleague was in the military and served for a couple of years. What my colleague should understand is to be able to deliver humanitarian and other aid, we need to create a safe and secure environment. The Kurds are fighting their enemy and we are supporting them.

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, obviously our Canadian Armed Forces are doing outstanding work, so let me quote the Government of Iraq's statement with respect to the Canadian Armed Forces:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemns in the strongest terms the brutal criminal act carried out by a terrorist group targeting the innocent Canadians who were performing their daily duties.... The Ministry announces solidarity with the Canadian government, and expresses thanks for its participation within the international coalition in the campaign against terrorism and the brutal attack against Iraq, and through providing humanitarian aids and logistical support, in addition to its willingness to participate in providing air cover within the coalition.

What are those specific gains that the Canadian Armed Forces have been able to make in pushing back against ISIL and Iraq? They are doing outstanding work, but maybe the member could outline the specific gains that the Canadian Armed Forces have made?

**Mr. Corneliu Chisu:** Mr. Speaker, our Canadian Armed Forces stopped ISIL's capability to advance further and helped the Iraqi forces to hold their ground and to be able to regroup and fight the evil of ISIL.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we are here this evening to talk about the government's motion to extend Canada's combat mission in Iraq in response to the atrocious acts of violence and serious human rights violations perpetrated by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

Before us we have the Prime Minister's request to shift the advise and assist mission that began in September to a front-line combat mission, after the air campaign that began in November 2014, during which Canada conducted 53 air strikes in Iraq.

After just completing our commitment in Afghanistan, where troop deployment was the longest in our history—12 years—resulting in 40,000 veterans, 160 deaths, thousands of injured and thousands more with post-traumatic stress disorder, we are now embarking on another conflict.

In the meantime, many of our veterans and their loved ones still do not have access to adequate health care, benefits and other types of support, because of how this government is managing Veterans Affairs.

*Government Orders*

Since the fall, the government has deployed 69 members of the special operations forces and roughly 600 additional Canadian Forces troops to Iraq. The government has maintained that this is not a combat mission, but we know that since January, the Canadian special operations forces have exchanged fire with Islamic State militants on Iraqi soil.

The death of Sergeant Andrew Joseph Doiron confirms to us that the situation is much more complex, and reminds us of the risks associated with deploying our troops to the front lines and of our duty as members of Parliament to take our role here seriously.

In light of the government's refusal to call this a combat mission, we wonder what impact that will have on the compensation and danger pay of Canadian Forces members. Let us not forget that in 2013, danger pay was reduced for our troops in Afghanistan who were training the Afghan army because of the supposed lack of danger.

● (2035)

[English]

Paul Heinbecker, Canada's last ambassador to the UN Security Council, said in *The Globe and Mail* on March 23 that our women and men in uniform have no place being in Iraq and they certainly have no place being in Syria.

[Translation]

Canada does not have to participate in this war. We should instead help save lives on the ground by finding solutions to the humanitarian crisis.

[English]

I will recall that the U.S. ambassador to Canada, Bruce Heyman, said on CBC's *The House* on September 27:

We'd like as much more as Canada is willing to contribute, whether it's... humanitarian, whether it's militarily, at every level. By the way military alone isn't going to solve this problem...we're going to need help at multiple levels to ultimately destroy and degrade ISIL.

[Translation]

Norway, South Korea and New Zealand, among others, do not have a combat role. They are making a strictly humanitarian contribution, which is truly needed. There are serious human rights violations, including attacks that directly target the people and civilian infrastructure, executions and other civilian murders, kidnappings, rape and other forms of sexual and physical violence.

To date, the violence has caused the displacement of 2.5 million people in Iraq alone, and 5.2 million others require humanitarian assistance. At least 20% of the 2.5 million people displaced by war have a crucial need for protection, especially against trauma and sexual violence. This situation is made worse by the effects of the crisis in Syria on the region, because neighbouring countries are desperately trying to deal with the refugees and violence in Syria.

Syria has been in turmoil for five years, mired in a war that makes no distinction between civilians and combatants. Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed and half the population has fled. Neighbouring countries, which normally would accept Iraqi refugees, are already overwhelmed by the high number of Syrian refugees.

[English]

How can we address this dire situation? As Nelson Mandela said, our greatest weapon in the struggle for peace is education. That is because education is key to security and economic opportunity. We know children are disproportionately affected by armed conflict and by displacement. More than 70% of internally displaced children in Iraq remain out of school. Canada should increase its focus on the welfare of children and access to educational facilities.

We need to ensure that immediate needs such as water, food security, shelter, health, and psychosocial support are met. We must fight against sexual violence, support survivors, and protect minorities. We need to support the development of social infrastructure, supporting the communities themselves, and that means addressing the structural inequalities underpinning the violence in order to eliminate the possibility of more extremism arising.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said:

Over the longer-term, the biggest threat to terrorists is not the power of missiles—it is the politics of inclusion.

[Translation]

We know that peace and equality are linked. The empowerment of women is a powerful force behind economic growth, social and political stability and lasting peace. Women who are empowered are the foundation of communities that can fight radicalization and extremism.

For that reason, the NDP is asking the Government of Canada to work on contributing to the creation of responsible, democratic and peaceful governance in Iraq and to fight the threat of the group known as the Islamic State and other militant groups.

● (2040)

[English]

I want to cite for the House an article co-authored by the executive director of UN Women and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, and Radhika Coomaraswamy. This article in *Foreign Policy* is called “Women Are the Best Weapon in the War Against Terrorism”. It was published on February 10, 2015. It states:

Militarized counterterrorism operations disrupt economic and social activity, and destroy civilian infrastructure—the schools, markets, and medical facilities relied on by women in traditional caring roles. When governments focus resources on expensive military operations, social ministries like health, family services, and education are often the first to face budget cuts. Civilian displacement leaves women and girls vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence, including, with grim regularity, crimes committed by the security forces supposed to be protecting them.

The failure to prevent these negative impacts constitutes willful negligence. It results in women's re-victimization, and ultimately in more poverty, more desperation, and more radicalization. Militarized responses always risk civilian casualties and threaten to drive marginalized young people into the ranks of extremists. Indeed, as increasing media reports show, despite the brutal and well-known crimes committed against women by the Islamic State, teenage girls are reportedly running away from their homes to join it.

[Translation]

In closing, I must say what the leader of the opposition and of the NDP said so well during his speech on Tuesday:

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ISIS has thrived in Iraq and Syria precisely because those countries lack stable, well-functioning governments capable of maintaining peace and security within their own borders.

Canada's first contribution should be to use every diplomatic, humanitarian, and financial resource at our disposal to respond to the overwhelming human tragedy unfolding on the ground and to strengthen political institutions in both those countries...

...the tragedy in Iraq and Syria will not end with another western-led invasion in that region. It will end by helping the people...to build the political institutions and security capabilities they need to oppose these threats themselves.

The Islamic State is already reacting to the air campaign by dispersing its troops, sheltering in civilian areas and frequently changing location. Air strikes elicit violent responses in local communities, leading to further instability and insecurity.

Instead of engaging in an unending military combat that is not supported by the United Nations Security Council, the NDP urges Canada's Conservative government to make its contribution on a humanitarian level.

[*English*]

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know where to begin with that speech. The member said that the coalition response to this genocidal terrorist organization is what is creating civilian displacement. Frankly, what planet is she living on?

One hundred percent of the civilian displacement has been caused by this genocidal organization that is trying to create a seventh-century caliphate through ethnic cleansing, mass rape, sexual slavery, and barbarism of the worst kind. This is why people have been displaced from their communities. This is why the Assyrians, Yazidis, and Mandaeans of the Nineveh Plains had to flee after that being their homeland for millennia

I happen to know the Iraqi Canadian community quite well. It was a result of, frankly, my initiative in 2009 to open the largest refugee resettlement program in 25 years, in which we have welcomed more than 20,000 Iraqi refugees.

I know them quite well. We had a bunch of them here this week from the Kurdish community, the Yazidi community, and the Assyrian, Chaldean, Kurdish, Sunni Arab, and Shia communities. Every single one of those communities in this country supports the motion, supports the allied military campaign, and is actually calling on us to do more in terms of a military response to protect the civilians, to prevent the displacement of even more civilians.

My question for the member is this. What does she say to those Yazidis, Kurds, Chaldeans, and Assyrians in Canada who are asking for a military response to protect their people and prevent the creation of yet more victims? What is her response to them?

● (2045)

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** Mr. Speaker, I find it really too bad that the minister has, apparently, only a knowledge of the history of Iraq going back about two years. It seems as though he has forgotten that there have been decades of violent dictatorship in Iraq that have caused extremism to rise; and building political institutions that are democratic, strong, and inclusive has been very difficult. It has not been a priority of the international community. Rather, in 2003, the United States invaded Iraq against the will of the international community.

What we are seeing today is only a continuing of decades of violence not being addressed in long-term, sustainable ways. Obviously, what is happening right now is a humanitarian crisis of the highest level, but it did not arise out of nowhere.

We need to understand what the consequences are of intervention in Iraq and what it is going to mean decades in the future.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, even though the Liberal Party does not support the NDP's position, there are certain aspects of the position that are quite acceptable. I would like the member to provide comment on the issue the government is trying to shape on this. The Conservative spin that is coming out of the Prime Minister's Office is that, if we vote against the motion, somehow we are supporting ISIL.

We in the Liberal Party, and I suspect all members of the chamber, understand and appreciate just how abhorrent and revolting ISIL and its actions are. However, there are other alternatives. I wonder if she might want to provide some comment on the way the Conservatives are trying to spin this issue, which is definitely misinforming Canadians.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** Mr. Speaker, indeed it is very difficult to see what is happening with this sort of discussion and the way it is being taken out of context, when we are talking about intervening in a humanitarian way, as though that means I am not concerned. I am in fact alarmed by the situation.

I do want to stress that there is a completely different vision of how we should be intervening globally in conflicts; how we need to be able to support countries and communities; and how we need to be able to support development of communities economically. We need to be able to support the equality of women. These are things that create sustainable development. That is what we need to be going in and doing. Of course, right now there is a need for direct humanitarian aid, but also going into communities to prevent the spread is something we could be doing, rather than intervening militarily.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is certainly an honour to rise in the House today. The debate we are having is one of our most solemn responsibilities. We are talking about our government's motion that seeks an endorsement from the House of Commons for the government's decision to contribute military assets to the fight against ISIL.

As the motion before the House clearly outlines, the terrorist group known as ISIL has repeatedly called on its members to target Canada and Canadians at home and abroad. It is clear that ISIL poses a clear and active threat to the people of the Middle East, especially members of vulnerable religious and ethnic minority groups. ISIL is boastful in posting videos to the Internet of its brutal and barbaric campaigns of sexual violence, murder and intimidation.

### *Government Orders*

Canada cannot sit on the sidelines while innocent men, women and children are slaughtered by a genocidal death cult that also wants to bring brutal violence to our shores. The Prime Minister has made it clear that unless ISIL is confronted with strong and direct force, it will continue to grow and expand its territory. This is a threat to not only international peace and security, but also a direct threat to Canada and Canadians.

The situation is improving from last spring when ISIL was spreading at a terrifying pace. ISIL has more or less been halted and pushed back at the margins. This is in large part because of the breadth and intensity of the international opposition against ISIL not only in the west but throughout the Arab world as well.

ISIL continues to attract jihadi terrorists from around the globe and is attempting to increase its network of jihadi forces. ISIL continues to threaten nations like Canada and inspire attacks across the globe in many western nations. The Islamic state has clearly indicated that it will continue to target Canadians, Canada and our western allies that believe in standing up to its barbaric form of Islam. It is a disturbed, perverted ideology and anyone who does not accept ISIL's form of religion it believes should be killed. It is as self-evident to it as it is incomprehensible, barbaric and evil to us, but it is no idle threat.

ISIL does not just kill its enemies in the battlefield; it targets journalists, workers, and innocent men, women and children. There have been horrific and disturbing attacks against vulnerable and peaceful, ethnic and religious minorities. We know about these incidents because it brags about them. We must prevent and contain this peril before it leads to the entrenchment of repressive rule across the region.

Extending the current Canadian Armed Forces mission is not an impulsive or knee-jerk reaction, but a decision borne of necessity to protect Canada, an acknowledgement that we must continue to fight with our allies and partners in the pursuit of Canada's national interests to protect Canada and Canadians from an evil death cult that has declared war on all of us.

Our experience over the past few years has shown that we cannot expect quick and decisive victories, but it is no less necessary to act when confronted with the savagery of the enemy simply because we cannot affix an end point to the mission. It does not mean that we should walk away from our responsibilities as an international citizen. If we falter now, ISIL will continue to gain in strength, increase its brutality and ruthlessness, and consolidate its territory. This would plunge the Middle East into new depths of volatility, chaos and bloodshed. If ISIL's fundamentalism is not dealt with soon, we risk seeing it spread. We simply cannot allow that to happen.

There is not an either/or, and we are hearing that in the debate tonight when the NDP talk about humanitarian assistance. It is what the opposition parties would have us believe. We have been committed to humanitarian assistance. As the Prime Minister has said in the House, in the past six months we have helped to feed 1.7 million people in Iraq, provide shelter and relief supplies to 1.25 million children and give education to at least 500,000 children.

It has been said time and again that in order to provide humanitarian relief, there has to be stability. To be honest, the preference of the people who need humanitarian relief is to not have that need but to live in their countries in peace and return to their homes.

● (2050)

We have help to support 200,000 refugees in Iraq with food, water, shelter and protection. Canada is the fifth largest donor of aid to Iraq, and the sixth largest donor of aid to Syria. Through these efforts, we continue to provide one of the largest per capita donations of aid in the world.

Our participation in this multinational mission is in Canada's national interest. This much is clear. Indeed, it is a broad international coalition of more than 60 partners, approximately 30 of which contribute to the military effort led by the United States which has coalesced to confront ISIL.

Canada is collaborating with some of our closest allies and partners, including the United States, the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands and Australia to degrade and defeat ISIL. Moreover, Middle Eastern countries are playing a vital role in the coalition. Again, this demonstrates this is not just a western conflict against Islam. We have partners from many countries in the Middle East. Rather, it is a fight that pits broad international concerns for Iraq and Syria, regional stability and humanitarian assistance against murderous extremism.

That is why I will be supporting the government's motion before the House. I support our continued deployment of Canadian military assets to fight against ISIL and terrorists aligned with ISIL, using air strike capability to bomb ISIL in Iraq and Syria. I support the government's decision to extend this mission to March 30, 2016. I support the government's position that there should be no deployment of troops in a ground combat role.

I, like all parliamentarians, offer my resolute and wholehearted support and thanks to the brave men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces who stand on guard for all of us.

● (2055)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. I think that we all want peace and an end to violence, but this debate is not really about the ends, it is about the means. In that respect we disagree profoundly.

After so many years of military intervention in that part of the world, I do not understand how the member can believe that by extending the mission for 12 months we will manage to restore peace and allow people to go back home. Frankly, I think that we can learn from the past, come up with a more constructive approach and recognize the importance of local players. That is the key to all of this.

One thing the NDP motion is asking for is an end to the participation of Canadian Forces troops in combat and air strikes.

Does the member think that, rather than participate in combat and air strikes, we can find another approach to achieving real results?

*Government Orders*

[English]

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, I watched the maps and the maps showed a rapidly growing caliphate that was spreading across Iraq and Syria.

Like many in the House, we are aware of the horrific videos. We are aware of issues that have been inspired, whether they are in Paris, Australia or in Canada, in terms of the spread and the direct threat to Canada and other countries around this world.

These need to be degraded. It has been working. Again, if we look at a map today compared to where we were, that expansion has been stopped. It is due to the coalition efforts of many of our partners that are willing to do the very tough work that needs to be done to degrade this horrific threat.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government member just indicated that this had not been a knee-jerk reaction by the government, but that it had been well thought through.

The question I have for the member is a question that no one else in her caucus has answered. I have posed it a couple of times.

On CBC, there is a posting in the National news watch section that reads, “Syrian air strikes could help al-Qaeda”. Does the member have any comment on that issue? The sub-headline is, “Experts warn that the West’s focus on attacking ISIS is boosting its equally dangerous rival”. Could she provide any comment on that story? I am sure many Canadians are concerned about it. It is a story that has just appeared on CBC.

• (2100)

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, we know there are many incredible challenges in the Middle East. We are talking about the need to degrade ISIL.

There has certainly been significant work done in Afghanistan in terms of al Qaeda and other organizations, but, again, right now we are looking at a significant threat posed by ISIL, and not just against us. There is a huge coalition, whether it be France, Australia, many countries, that has identified the same needs as the Canadian government and is moving to take action.

**Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo for her support for the motion.

Could she quickly touch on how much humanitarian aid in the region and how important it is for the people who have been displaced by this terrorist organization?

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, in my speech, I briefly talked about the significant efforts we had made in being one of the biggest donors per capita. We heard earlier from one of my colleagues who had visited some of the camps. There is tremendous respect, support and gratitude from the people who have such needs.

Again, I have to go back to my original point. These people want to return to their homes and homelands. Being a refugee is not their choice. Most important, they want peace in their country.

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a very sobering responsibility that we all have as parliamentarians in

addressing this issue this evening. It is an issue that will involve sending brave men and women into harm's way. Therefore, I wish to say from the outset that I will be speaking against this motion, but wish to do so in a context and with a spirit of concern for the individuals that the government is prepared to send into harm's way in this quagmire. That is what I think we are asking them to do.

I would like to begin by providing an overview and then talk about issues of legality, which I believe are at issue here this evening.

First of all, this was initially a short mission, then a longer one, and now it is going to be a year-long mission to push us over past the election. After that, who knows how much longer it will be? Our experience in Afghanistan and the Americans' experience in Iraq would lead us to believe that it is not likely to be a short mission. That is probably why this issue is even more significant this evening than it would be if we took the Prime Minister at his word that it will only be until March of 2016.

To extend and expand for one year is misleading, given the history that anyone who studied in this part of the world would have to concede exists.

Some six months ago, the Leader of the Opposition asked the Prime Minister specifically whether Canadian troops would be involved in painting targets for air strikes or would accompany Iraqi troops to the front line. The Prime Minister said no. Of course, the tragic death of Sergeant Andrew Doiron proved that the Prime Minister had misled Parliament and the Canadian public.

The Leader of the Opposition stood up two days ago and very eloquently explained what military planners have told us from the get-go, which is that a successful mission requires two things. They are defined objectives and an exit strategy. It is our submission that the Conservative government has neither. It has no strategy, other than the obvious political one of dividing Canadians. It does not even know whether this is a mission to degrade or destroy, as different people in the government have said different things. One day it was to degrade; then the Minister of National Defence said that it was to destroy. Frankly, who knows? The Conservatives have no objective, except issues that are more political than otherwise whose goals are to divide Canadians.

Exit strategy? There is no such thing. I will speak a little later about the issues of legality in this context.

I suspect that polls have made it clear that we need to talk about radicalization, but where is there anything about the de-radicalization of our youth in this particular initiative? There is nothing. Rhetoric such as “it is an attack on Canada” and “we are at war” is misleading to the extreme and serves the Conservatives' purpose of getting us into this quagmire even further.

Do we have an alternative? Obviously we do: protect refugees and offer humanitarian support. Children are freezing to death in non-winterized camps. Families are destroyed.

*Government Orders*

I was talking to a friend I visited in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon. That economy is being destroyed by the millions of people who are surging across that border. Lebanon simply cannot afford it. Turkey is in the same position. I am not even talking about the internal displacement in Iraq and Syria.

The second thing that we think needs to be done, which Canada has done very well as a country, is assist in regional diplomacy. Canada used to be a country that did that. It is not anymore.

Third, we need to counter the extremist messaging and expose the brutality of ISIS. In a sense, we need to deal with that issue on the ground in order to turn public opinion, which I think is going to be required.

I have been to the mosque in Victoria a couple of times. I am going to Friday prayers again next week to see if the solutions that they are proposing to deal with any concerns arising in our community about radicalization can be dealt with, because if there is a threat, and if it is to Canada, it will be within our borders that we will solve that problem.

We have certainly see lone wolf extremists, as they are called, here in Ottawa. That does not mean there is a jihadi war against our country, rhetoric to the contrary.

In the words of our foreign affairs critic, this has gone from mission creep to mission leap. We do not even know what the costs are going to be. Apparently the effort by the member for St. John's East to get the information from the Parliamentary Budget Officer was denied. We do not know what it is going to cost, or if the government knows. There is a new report today from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who believes that our defence spending has become or will become unsustainable. I would have thought that was something that Canadians would be concerned about.

• (2105)

The humanitarian crisis that other colleagues have talked about is what I think ought to preoccupy the House, rather than painting targets and assisting in what can only be described, if any use of the English language is to be clear, as a combat mission to which the government wishes to commit our brave men and women. It is a combat mission that has no sanction from the United Nations, no sanction even from NATO. It seems we are the only NATO member other than the United States that is prepared to go into Syria.

As the official opposition, we were not opposed to and voted in favour of a mission that had the United Nations sanction. I speak of Libya. That is not what this is about, and I will talk about legality in a moment because that is what Canadians really wish to know about as well.

We can talk about the brutality. We all look at the pictures on TV. We all know how horrible ISIS is. This is not a situation of standing in Parliament and talking to each other about just how horrible this group is. We all know that to be true, but as a country, are we doing the right thing in committing our brave men and women in this context? That is what we are here to talk about, and I will be arguing that it is entirely illegal and that we have no trust in the Prime Minister in committing our troops in this fashion.

The mission has gone from 30 days to six months to a year, and now, we assume, forever, or another decade, or whatever it takes before we find ourselves in the same situation we found ourselves in in Afghanistan. Why is it any different here? Why will it be any different from what happened in that context? Somehow we are supposed to make an unholy alliance, like it or not, with Bashar al-Assad, the brutal dictator who kills his own people. It is unclear whether we are going in at the request of the Syrian people or not.

Sometimes an article captures things very well. Today's article by Mr. Siddiqui in the *Toronto Star* starts with "[The Prime Minister's] flip-flop on war fits pattern of deceit". I commend it to Canadians to read because it so clearly describes what is going on before our very eyes today. It says:

The non-combat mission featured combat. The short-term commitment has become long. No involvement in Syria has evolved into a war on Syria.

His reasons for extending and expanding the mission are patently false. The Islamic State did not move into Syria yesterday — it was there last year as well. It does not pose a direct threat to Canada the way the prime minister frames it in order to scare us, just as George W. Bush whipped up fear about weapons of mass destruction and terrorism to justify his wars and get re-elected.

If the Islamic State poses as big a threat to Canada as the Prime Minister says it does, why has he committed only six planes and 69 Special Forces soldiers?

And on and on. What we are dealing with in this context is so disingenuous.

In the time available to me, let me now turn to the legality of this issue.

The proposed motion by the Conservative government involves Canada engaging in an illegal act under international law. The only time an engagement is deemed legal is if it is sanctioned by the UN Security Council, unless some kind of anticipatory self-defence argument can be conjured up.

I commend to Canadians the speech given by my colleague, the MP for Toronto—Danforth, earlier today, a colleague who is a Rhodes Scholar in public international law who I suggest, on careful reading of his analysis, has eviscerated any pretext of legality by the government for what it is doing by claiming that somehow we should use the Judge Advocate General to give us legal opinion. Whatever happened, in our civil context, with the opinion from the Department of Foreign Affairs? Why are we using military advisers expert in the law of war to tell us whether this mission is indeed legal?

Of course, today we heard the Minister of Foreign Affairs say it is about solicitor-client privilege, so Canadians have no right to see the legal basis. To that I would say, with respect, nonsense. The government is the client and can reveal that information should it wish to do so. From my perspective, that argument is as bogus as could be in the context of this discussion. If Canadians do not have a right to know this kind of information, how can we trust the government with the mission leap that I have described in this context?

*Government Orders*

If I may just end with one comment, Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary-General, said the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq was a mistake and helped to create the Islamic State militant group. He also blamed regional powers for making the conflict worse. If the Prime Minister had been in government then, Canada would also have been contributing to the development of ISIS.

• (2110)

In other words, the various acts of military aggression by the west have directly contributed to the radicalization that has led to the deplorable state that we are here to debate today.

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there were a number of mistruths in the member's speech.

For example, he said the government has not been clear about our objective. We could not be more clear. Our objective is, in co-operation with our allies, to degrade the so-called Islamic State to the point where it can no longer pose a threat to Canada or the international community and, I would add, to degrade it to a point where it no longer has the seductive power to radicalize or recruit individuals, including Canadians. That is how I would characterize defeating that organization.

He says that we are in a quagmire but then goes on to quote an article saying we have only contributed six aircraft and 69 ground personnel. Which is it? In terms of a quagmire and a so-called exit strategy, it is very simple. Once Canada believes we have achieved our objective or we are no longer able to make a useful contribution, we bring back the aircraft—nine, actually—and the 69 ground personnel.

He says humanitarian support is an alternative to what we are doing. No, it is not, because we are already doing humanitarian support with the largest per capita contribution of any developed country, the fifth-largest contribution overall, at nearly \$70 million.

He says we do not know the cost. That is not true. We revealed the costs of the mission for the first six months in this fiscal year and we have revealed the estimated costs of the mission going forward.

He says that we require sanction from the United Nations. Is it now the position of the NDP that President Vladimir Putin and the Chinese Politburo should have a veto on Canadian foreign policy?

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his questions. I think there were five or six of them, and I am expected to answer them in, I suppose, one minute or two.

The first question I think was about what the mission is and whether it was clear. The Minister of Foreign Affairs initially said on Wednesday that our commitment is to degrade ISIS, and that will be the focus of our operations in the region. Then the Minister of National Defence, who just spoke, earlier had told CBC's *Power and Politics* that the goal was to defeat ISIS. I do not know if that is clear to him, but it certainly is not a clear objective to me.

A quagmire is something one gets into deeper and deeper, as we saw in Vietnam and Afghanistan. It seems to me that if he is proud of our humanitarian support, we would like to make him even prouder by doing more for the poor people of the area.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, one of the things that has been oft repeated in the debate tonight is that we are with our allies in the strike into Syria. While there is no doubt there are a lot of countries contributing in general to the campaign against ISIS, we make a mistake in jumping to the conclusion that many other countries are willing to conduct air strikes into Syria.

In fact, we know that the European nations of Denmark, France, the Netherlands, and Germany, as well as Australia, are not prepared to bomb inside Syria. Of western allies, only the United States is conducting those bombing campaigns, and they are much more problematic in a country like Syria in civil war.

Even now, the air strikes in Iraq that the U.S. is conducting, with the invitation of the Iraqi government, have made groups of militia angry at the United States, and they are withdrawing from being willing to work with the U.S. to retake Tikrit. I only mention these things and ask my friend from Victoria if he would not agree that western military involvement in largely local sectarian violence can have many elements go awry, and that even with the best of intentions, Canada's current government may regret this decision.

• (2115)

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Mr. Speaker, of course I agree that military involvement of this sort can go awry, to use her phrase.

What we will be doing is joining a very small contingent of nations in going into Syria. Right now only America, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Qatar, Bahrain, the UAE, and Morocco have launched strikes on Syria. Canada will be only the second NATO nation to join the Syrian side of the mission, which I think is telling.

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise to speak in the debate this evening to support this important motion. Our objective remains the same: to degrade ISIL so that it no longer poses a threat to Canadians and the international community, as the hon. Minister of National Defence just stated.

We know that the threat ISIL poses is real. It is a threat to the world and to Canadians right here at home. The international jihadist movement has declared war on our country, and we must respond. That is why our Conservative government has shown leadership and has put forward measures to protect Canadians.

Throughout our nation's history, brave Canadians have fought against immeasurable odds for what they believed was right. We have not abandoned that tradition.

Our government's approach is multi-faceted and includes both military support and humanitarian aid. As a physician and as the Minister of Status of Women, I know that it is especially important for Canada to continue to support the victims of ISIL's sexual violence. These are truly barbaric acts: sexual slavery, forced marriage, and rape. ISIL has no respect for human life, and its actions represent all that is evil in this world.

*Government Orders*

Canada is providing a variety of services, including medical support, legal advice, counselling, and clinical care for sexual assault survivors. ISIL's victims require our support, and that is what we as Canadians are providing. However, they also require security and freedom from ISIL's reign of terror, something the opposition would do nothing to address. The military component of our approach allows aid to flow to these areas and allows for more accountable security for aid workers. Aid workers simply cannot get to the places they need to be unless they are protected. The opposition seems to be completely blind to this issue.

Our Conservative government has committed substantial funds to international aid agencies, including the UN and the Red Cross, which have provided food for upward of 1.5 million people, shelter, and relief supplies to over 1.25 million people, and improved access to education opportunities for over 500,000 children, something the opposition again turns a blind eye to. In fact, a previous member stated that we have not done any of these things, which I found quite abhorrent.

In addition, we are working with our British partners in Iraq and are looking for other opportunities to make sure that we address these heinous crimes. The priority is and will continue to be those who are most at risk because they are religious minorities, sexual minorities, or victims of sexual abuse. The reality and gravity of this situation needs to be addressed, and we are doing just that.

I would like to turn my attention to Canada's response. Canada is at the forefront of international efforts to address the situation in Iraq and Syria, and we will continue to co-operate with like-minded partners in responding to this crisis. Canadians have never shied away from our responsibility to our international partners. Our actions with our partners are focused on five key areas: military support to our partners, working to stem the flow of foreign fighters, taking steps to stop ISIL's financing and funding, addressing the humanitarian crisis in the region, and undermining ISIL's narrative.

Canada has deployed six CF-18 fighter aircraft to join the air strikes against ISIL in Iraq as well as several dozen armed forces personnel to provide strategic and tactical counsel to Iraqi forces fighting ISIL militants.

Canadian and allied air strikes are making a difference in Iraq. They have destroyed ISIL equipment, reversed some of the territorial gains, and affected ISIL's leadership, command, control, and logistics. They are stopping the advance. They are making efforts to make sure that individuals can get back to their homes. This is important. That is what the Syrian people want. They want to be in their own homes.

In response to the crisis in Iraq, Canada has committed over \$102 million in humanitarian, stabilization, and security programs, and as was just mentioned by my colleague, the Minister of National Defence, these are the largest per capita humanitarian donations. Canada is at the forefront of international efforts to address this situation. We are working rapidly to deliver new development assistance programming in Iraq both to address short-term needs during the crisis and to support stability and prosperity in Iraq over the long term.

In addition, Canada is deeply concerned about the reports of foreign fighters, including Canadians, participating in terrorist activities perpetrated by ISIL. To this end, Canada has recently committed an additional \$5 million in assistance to support regional efforts to stem the flow of foreign fighters to Iraq and Syria and has listed ISIL as a terrorist entity in Canada under the Criminal Code. We have had success attacking targets in Iraq and are now expanding to where the terrorists are consolidating.

● (2120)

As I and my colleagues have said before, the jihadi terrorists in ISIL have declared war on Canada. They have specifically targeted Canada by urging supporters to attack disbelieving Canadians in any manner and vowing that we should not feel secure even in our own homes. I am not sure what part of this threat opposition members missed, but it is concerning to me that they do not believe that we need to actually make sure that Canadians are safe and secure.

Unlike the NDP and the Liberals, we actually take this threat very seriously. We believe that unless confronted with strong and direct force, the threat ISIL poses to Canada will continue to grow. That is why Canada is not sitting on the sidelines, as the NDP and the Liberals would have us do. We instead are proud members of the international allied coalition fighting ISIL.

Finally, I would like to express my personal thanks to the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces, who put themselves in harm's way selflessly every day to protect our democracy and to protect Canadians

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there is a bit of a theme I would like to put to the hon. minister concerning the kind of exaggerations we hear from the other side. It is the point about Canada being the largest contributor per capita in humanitarian efforts.

The country of Turkey, which is a coalition partner, has spent \$5 billion looking after 1.7 million refugees in Turkey and Syria, and it has had international contributions of up to \$265 million for that. How does that make Canada the single largest contributor, whether it is per capita or otherwise, to the humanitarian effort?

Why does the government keep fantasizing about some of these things just to try to bolster the case? A lot of people, frankly, are wondering whether they can trust the Conservative government about anything.

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** Mr. Speaker, I guess I would ask the member opposite why his party thinks we can deliver humanitarian aid without having the humanitarians supported and secured. I stood on the ground in Afghanistan. I actually had to have Canadian Armed Forces members with me to make sure that we could do our jobs. I encourage the member opposite to understand how humanitarian aid is actually delivered in these places.



*Government Orders*

Canadians are doing what we should be doing on safety and security to make sure that we can deliver humanitarian aid. There are 1.7 million people who have received food; 1.2 million people, in fact more than that, have actually received shelter and relief. Over 500,000 children have received education. Obviously the opposition has no idea how to read, because they have not actually read the documents on what Canadians are doing to make sure that these individuals are safe, secure, and receiving the humanitarian aid they deserve.

• (2125)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a point about the government and the Prime Minister not being clear about their objectives.

Depending on which minister it is, or even the Prime Minister, one might say “destroy ISIL”, another might say “degrade”, another might say “defeat”. In fact, the Minister of Foreign Affairs explicitly compared this war to Afghanistan, stating that we are in this for the long term. In Afghanistan, of course, we all know that it meant a decade.

How long does the member believe we will be in Syria? Are we talking about destroying ISIL completely, or are we talking about degrading it? I wonder if she could provide some comment on those two specific questions.

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** Mr. Speaker, I actually answered this at the beginning of my speech. I encourage the member opposite to read that again. I will not repeat myself.

As opposed to focusing on semantics, our government is focused on the safety and security of the individuals whose lives need to be saved and also on making sure that there is peace in the region.

Let me be very clear. This is a huge undertaking by members of the Canadian Forces. We should be supporting them and making sure that they are able to move forward in what they have to do.

Our government has outlined that we have made a one-year commitment with respect to what we are moving forward on. That is what the Prime Minister announced earlier this week.

I will be very clear: we need to make sure that there is safety and security in the region to make sure that there is humanitarian aid delivered.

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the minister said that the opposition does not know how to read. However, obviously the minister does not know how to add, because she talks about the humanitarian aid and the so-called benefits the humanitarian aid from the Conservative government has actually brought to the 2.5 million refugees who are out sleeping in extremely harsh conditions tonight, but it adds up to five cents a day per refugee. The minister seems to think that for five cents a day, they can provide a lot of food for those refugees. Five cents a day is a few grains of rice and perhaps a tablespoon of powdered milk.

My question is very simple. Since the Conservatives seem to be unclear, if not speaking mistruths about every aspect of this mission, why have they tried to cover up the fact that the humanitarian aid amounts to five cents a day per refugee?

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** Mr. Speaker, this is absolutely false. I would encourage anyone who is listening to this to know that actually this is absolutely false.

Let us be very clear. The Canadian government has made substantive investments to make sure that there is available humanitarian aid. What I care the most about is making sure that women and children, religious minorities, and sexual minorities are protected and that they receive humanitarian aid. That is what Canadians are doing. That is what the Canadian Armed Forces are doing.

We are supporting that effort. The opposition is completely against supporting any of these efforts to make sure that individuals receive humanitarian aid or the security they need to receive it.

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today on a critical international issue, the ongoing crisis caused by the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

While the military dimension of this crisis is important, it constitutes but one aspect of Canada's response. Indeed, Canada's contribution is also aimed to address the political, security, humanitarian and human rights dimensions of this crisis. I will elaborate on this in the second part of my speech, but first let me point out Canada's part in the international coalition against ISIL. In the summer of 2014 when ISIL broke through Iraq's borders, its rapid territorial gains resulted in significant internal displacement and abhorrent acts of violence against civilians. In response, Canada joined a U.S.-led coalition of over 60 partner countries to counter the ISIL threat.

Most coalition partners' contributions include military equipment and humanitarian supplies. Canada is part of a small group that is also contributing military support to forces combating ISIL. This small group includes many of Canada's closest allies and partners, such as the United States, the U.K., France and Australia as well as a number of key regional partners, including Jordan and Kuwait.

Coalition partners recognize that ISIL's advance has destabilized the region and poses a very real threat to global security. Defeating ISIL and bringing stability to Iraq will require a long-term multi-year effort.

The only sustainable solution to defeating terrorism and creating stability is an inclusive Iraq government that serves all of its ethnic and religious communities. For too long, marginalization and discrimination have marred Iraq's political process. Political reconciliation is needed to effectively address Iraq's sectarian challenges.

To foster conditions conducive to this political reconciliation, Canada and its coalition partners are working along a number of lines of effort, namely carrying out military efforts to degrade ISIL, stemming the flow of foreign fighters, limiting ISIL's financing and funding, providing humanitarian assistance, undertaking stabilization efforts and countering ISIL's message.

In February 2015, the coalition established working groups around these lines of effort, and Canada is a full participant in each area of engagement. I will now provide a more detailed outline of Canada's contribution to each line of effort.

### *Government Orders*

In response to this crisis, Canada's military contribution has included six CF-18 fighter aircraft to participate in air strikes against ISIL's extremists in Iraq. Canada has also committed a number of support aircraft, including one CC-150 Polaris tanker, two CP-140 Aurora surveillance aircraft and one dedicated airlift aircraft.

Canada has also deployed several dozen armed forces personnel to provide strategic and tactical counsel for Iraq forces fighting ISIL, and has assisted in the delivery of critical military supplies from contributing allies to Kurdish peshmerga forces.

Canada is extremely concerned by reports of foreign fighters, including Canadians, participating in terrorist activities perpetrated by ISIL. Additionally, when these Canadian foreign fighters return, they pose a serious domestic security threat. That is why Canada is working with partners to address this threat, including to the Global Counterterrorism Forum's foreign terrorist fighter working group.

During the former Minister of Foreign Affairs' visit to Iraq in September, Canada announced \$5 million over the next three years to support regional efforts to detect, deter and interdict foreign fighters at source, destination and transit points, and to limit their movement in Syria and Iraq.

On March 4, 2015, the Minister of Foreign Affairs visited Iraq as part of his first overseas trip as Minister of Foreign Affairs. He met with the Iraqi Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and the Speaker of the Council of Representatives, and at these meetings, our Minister of Foreign Affairs reaffirmed Canada's support to Iraq.

Canada is also very concerned about the financing generated by and provided to the terrorist group ISIL. We have demonstrated our commitment to stopping terrorist financing by contributing to the financial action task force report on ISIL financing, as well as by participating in the Manama meeting on combating the financing of terrorism in November, 2014.

Canada's efforts to fully and effectively implement the financial action task force's recommendations on terrorist financing are ongoing, and Canada is also supporting capacity building efforts in the region to help governments protect their financial systems from terrorist financing efforts.

● (2130)

Canada is also making important contributions in the area of stabilization and development efforts. One of the government's main priorities is responding to sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by ISIL. UN reports of women and girls being bought and sold in Mosul was one shocking example of the sexual violence being inflicted on women by ISIL.

That is why Canada has made a contribution of up to \$5 million to Justice Rapid Response and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to investigate sexual violence and other serious human rights abuses. Canada also made a \$5-million contribution to the prevention of and response to sexual violence and related abuses. Our support is being used to increase access to services and treatment for Syrian and Iraqi refugees and displaced persons who have been victims of violence in ISIL-affected areas.

Another major Canadian priority in this area is the protection of religious minority communities. The ongoing severe oppression of

religious and ethnic communities that reject ISIL's extremist ideology underscores the barbaric nature of ISIL's terrorist actions. The Office of Religious Freedom is developing projects to monitor and protect the rights of religious minorities in Iraq and the region.

On the development side, in 2014, Canada identified Iraq as a partner country for Canadian bilateral assistance. It will aim to address short-term needs during the crisis and support stability and prosperity in Iraq over the longer term.

On the security front, Canada has provided \$10 million in non-lethal security assistance for equipment, including personal protective gear, vehicles, GPS and robots to disable improvised explosive devices. This amount is in addition to the direct military support being provided by the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces that I mentioned earlier in my remarks.

The security of the broader region is critically important to Canada, as well as to our coalition partners. Therefore, Canada is assisting Jordan in its efforts to contain ISIL by providing equipment and training to enhance Jordan's ability to identify and respond to terrorist threats. Canadian assistance will also support Jordan's efforts to manage the influx of refugees.

The humanitarian situation in Iraq continues to deteriorate as ISIL perpetrates acts of brutality. That is why since the beginning of the crisis, Canada has committed \$67.4 million to respond to the humanitarian needs of Iraqis affected by the violence.

ISIL has been adept at recruiting supporters. Canada is working with its allies to support local and international initiatives to counter ISIL narratives. At the Global Counterterrorism Forum ministerial meeting in September 2014, Canada announced \$1.5 million funding for the Hedayah centre of excellence on countering violent extremism and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund.

In January 2015, Canada announced up to \$9 million for the Munk School of Global Affairs' digital public square project. This initiative will increase digital space for free expression, open political dialogue and engagement in places where civil society and citizens' participation is under threat and counter extremist narratives. This initiative complements our work to reduce radicalization at home through enhanced community engagement and dialogue.

Collectively, these efforts are designed to impede the recruitment of foreign fighters to ISIL, diminish financial and material support to the group and discourage the ideological support it seeks.

In addition, Canada has been very active on the diplomatic front. Along with our allies, Canada is encouraging Iraqi leaders to embrace inclusion and to implement a comprehensive program that addresses the divisions in their society.

*Government Orders*

Canadian diplomatic efforts have also focused on strengthening international processes to address illicit financial flows, countering violent extremism, supporting persecuted minorities and keeping ISIL-perpetrated sexual crimes on the international agenda. In this regard, Canadian ministers and diplomats have maintained an intensive level of dialogue and engagement with Iraqi leaders and our coalition partners.

In conclusion, our engagement in Iraq incorporates a range of measures to tackle the various security, humanitarian, human rights and political aspects of this conflict. The challenges that Iraq faces are enormous.

The good news is that the international community is united in responding to the threat of ISIL. The threat posed by ISIL is broad-based, and Canada is taking a holistic approach in response to this crisis. We are doing our part, and Canadians can be proud of this contribution.

• (2135)

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the listing of the contributions and we agree with many of the contributions the member talked about in terms of Canada's efforts. However, I want to ask the member this.

The government and the member talked about terrorists, and used the word often, particularly in terms of Canada and Canada's fears. However, yesterday there was an editorial in the *Globe and Mail* with respect to Syria which talked about the actual threat that ISIL poses to Canada. It stated that the Prime Minister:

...has repeatedly tried to closely tie ISIS to the terrorist threat in Canada. The truth is that the same nihilistic ideology may motivate both. But so far, the actual connections are thin to non-existent.

Again and again we hear of the direct threat ISIL poses to Canada. However, Canadians do not even believe that, and more and more people are understanding that this is part of the current government's propaganda. A recent poll showed that the majority of Canadians supported the mission and the former mission in Iraq, or did at that point at least. I believe the extension is a different matter. However, in the poll a wide margin, 38%, saw the war as more dangerous to Canada and only 19% making us safer, so what I am trying to understand here—

• (2140)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order, please. This is only the first question in our five-minute round, so we need to give some time to the hon. member for Brandon—Souris.

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** Mr. Speaker, I would not expect the member to understand or agree with very much of what I said because the NDP have been voting against us all along. The only thing that is thin and non-existent is the NDP support for keeping Canadians safe.

The New Democrats do not seem to believe that jihadists are terrorists and that these jihadist activities of ISIL are connected to what exactly happened in this very building. Therefore, I do not know how much of a realistic example they need to make sure that we are defending ourselves from this group that has declared war on Canada and Canadian citizens. As has been said many times in this House, and I think they have even heard some New Democrat members say so themselves, this is the opportunity we have as a

government. The most responsible issue that a government can handle is keeping its citizens safe.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, we have been exchanging a lot of information about the scale of humanitarian aid. It is clear from my comments that I am pleased that Canada is contributing humanitarian assistance. However, at this point we are really contributing a drop in the bucket in relation to the need.

The UN has said that this Syrian conflict and the humanitarian crisis in 2014 required \$5.9 billion in response. The world community collectively came up with 60% against that need. We are talking about four million refugees found in camps in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. We are talking about an extensive humanitarian crisis where at this point the world community is failing the people of Syria. Therefore, while we are debating military action, I think it behooves us that we look at the scale and the scope of the need before we pat ourselves on the back for having done enough.

I ask my hon. colleague if he would not agree.

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** Mr. Speaker, when we started out in this process the opposition said that we had no humanitarian aid. I just talked about \$67 million that we have committed to respond to the humanitarian needs of just the Iraqis affected by the violence. My colleague from Simcoe—Grey has just indicated the millions of citizens there who we have helped with food, education and a number of other supports with respect to humanitarian aid, so when is it enough? Certainly, we would always like to do more, as the member has indicated, but first we must ensure that the people we are getting the humanitarian aid to are safe, that the people who are delivering it are safe, and that they feel comfortable knowing that we can direct this humanitarian aid to where it is needed the most.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Before we carry on, I would just comment, more than anything, that obviously with the debate this evening and through the course of this day there is great interest in participating by hon. members, not only of their remarks but also through the five minute question period. We only have five minutes for questions and comments after each ten minute speech. The Chairs will do the very best we can to try to get all of those involved.

Hon. members should know that the time they take—extra time perhaps with their preamble and/or remarks—is taking away time that might be available to other hon. members. We do our best to be judicious to ensure all hon. members have the opportunity to participate and do the best to share that out in the way we typically do. However, we beg the hon. members' indulgence in keeping their interventions at least concise enough so other hon. members will have the opportunity to participate. Of course, it is always a good idea for members to watch the Chair from time in the course of their remarks so they can see how they are doing time wise.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

*Government Orders*

• (2145)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, many of us are rising this evening to take part in the debate on the most important decision we have to make as parliamentarians. We must decide whether to send our armed forces personnel into combat.

I am so tired of hearing the Conservatives' rhetoric in this House. If any other party takes a more pacifist position, they equate that with contempt for our armed forces.

We need to be careful and think long and hard about where we send our armed forces, why we are sending them and the possibility of success, and we must have an exit strategy. These are important fundamentals and a way to demonstrate our profound respect for our armed forces.

Through all these months of debate, we have heard so many childish comments from across the aisle that one would think this is high school. I am sick of hearing them. I must reiterate, we need to be very careful about our decision. Our positions must show our profound respect for the members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

We must therefore rise and decide whether to vote for or against the motion to extend Canada's combat mission in Iraq. The organization that prompted this evening's debate, and indeed a host of other problems around the world for months now, is the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, a terrorist organization. I will also refer to it as ISIL and the Islamic State. Although I hate to admit it, there is a certain poetry to its name, but let us stick to the basics.

What is the Islamic State, exactly? It is an organization that has displaced 2.5 million civilians in Iraq by conducting military operations that are completely barbaric. Because of that organization, another 5.2 million people are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. It has killed at least 5,000 people. That is one number I came across, but I think it actually is much higher.

Another troubling thing about the activities of the Islamic State is that it finances its activities in large part by exporting oil from the lands it conquers and charging the residents arbitrary taxes. It simply kills a woman's husband, then taxes her and tells her she has no say in the matter. It also collects ransom from kidnappings. While they are at it, why not take barbarism to the extreme? My colleagues all agree: the extreme barbarism displayed by the Islamic State has to stop.

As always, the Conservatives start with a consensus and then brag about taking action. That is where the problems begin. On the basic issue there is consensus, but when it comes to how to approach the issue, once again, we are headed for a frigging mess. I apologize, Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if that is considered unparliamentary language.

We cannot vote in favour of the motion on extending the mission in Iraq for two fundamental reasons. The first reason is the lies. For months we have heard a litany of lies. When the government asks the public to accept major expenditures because we are engaged in a conflict and asks members of our armed forces to risk their lives, then it has to be transparent.

The Prime Minister lied. He is miring Canada in a conflict without being accountable and without having an exit strategy. The U.S. Army was the last major army to go to Iraq without an exit strategy. For nearly two decades, it sent troops there and bombed the country and so forth, all without an exit strategy. Two decades later, what is the result? Have things calmed down in the Middle East, Iraq and Syria? Are these people building co-operatives and voting freely? No.

• (2150)

The situation now is even worse than it was 20 years ago. We are having another go at it without an exit strategy.

We went from a mission that was supposed to be an advise and assist mission to a six-month bombing mission, and then to a combat mission on the front lines. Unfortunately, the death of Sergeant Doiron, killed by friendly fire, is proof of that. Canadians at home understand that you cannot be involved in a friendly fire incident if you are not at the front. That is impossible. If you are behind the front lines, allies will not turn around and fire on you. If such situations arise, it is because you are at the front. I am pleased that one of my colleagues who was in the army told me that my analysis is correct.

On September 30, the Prime Minister said “there is not a direct combat role”. A few months later, in January, Canadian soldiers who were providing ground support for air strikes exchanged gunfire with Islamic State forces. There were at least three such exchanges between late January and mid-February.

Another aspect of the motion that is really worrisome is that it allows us to now take action in Syria. People at home need to know that. Syria is led by Bashar al-Assad. He is running a monstrous regime in an extremely complex situation involving rebel clans and unclear affiliations.

Bashar al-Assad is responsible for over 220,000 civilian deaths and 4 million refugees in just four years. This regime's armed force is made up of about 50,000 people, but these rebels are sometimes a bit disorganized.

I want to ask the House a fundamental question. In such a complex environment, with a tyrant in power, with rebels who, while somewhat disorganized, are fairly well armed and more or less radicalized, and with refugees scattered all over, where should the bomb be dropped? Where are they going to drop this magical bomb that will improve the situation? Can they show us on a map? I would like the Minister of National Defence to show me an exact point on the map where he wants to drop bombs in order to improve the situation.

The situation is so complex, he would not be able to point to a single location on the map. Dropping bombs is not a magic solution. It is absolutely not.

Worse still, under lies and arguments that make it impossible for us to support this motion because we cannot trust the government, information was hidden from the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

*Government Orders*

On February 16, the Minister of National Defence announced that so far, Canada had spent \$122 million on the combat mission in Iraq. The next day, the Parliamentary Budget Officer released his estimates, which were on the order of \$166 million. We have barely entered the conflict, and we are already in an F-35 situation, and we are wondering if there will be any transparency about the costs.

I do not always agree with how our neighbours to the south decide to intervene, but at least they have the advantage of being very transparent about reporting their expenditures to the American people. I gather that costs are updated publicly every 48 hours. That is not at all the case here. We cannot trust a government that cannot even be honest about the costs stemming from its own decision to enter a conflict.

The government has also awkwardly offered up a whole series of false arguments, including false claims about the coalition.

Most of the nations that make up the coalition, including Norway, South Korea and New Zealand, are not participating in combat. They are giving tens of millions of dollars to address humanitarian needs.

There have been lies about the effectiveness of the mission. When we started bombing ISIL forces, which I am loathe to give any credit to, as everyone can understand, they moved and hid among civilians. We have serious doubts about whether this plan can even be effective.

• (2155)

Small advances were the result of the courage of the Kurds, who were engaged in dangerous combat on the ground.

In conclusion, the government also lied about the UN. The UN did indeed put forward a resolution, but it said that what was important was to target sources of funding for the Islamic State and cut them off as quickly as possible. The UN never said to send in soldiers or put boots on the ground. That is not true.

If at least our Prime Minister thought we needed to take military action and he had panache, courage and a good sense of his office, and he met with world leaders to convince them that NATO and the UN should take action, I might not agree, but I could respect him. That is nothing like what we are seeing here.

**Mr. Bernard Trottier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for La Francophonie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech by my colleague opposite. He lauded the involvement of Norway and New Zealand, but does he know that Canada is the fifth-largest donor of humanitarian aid in Iraq and the sixth-largest in Syria?

If he is lauding the involvement of New Zealand, Norway and other countries, he should also laud Canada's involvement on the humanitarian front. He could at least give us that. The military coalition has some 60 members. It includes countries like Bahrain, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco and Qatar. These are countries in the region that know there is a serious threat to public safety. The coalition also includes countries like the United States, France, the United Kingdom and Australia. These are countries that know threats have been made against them. Canada is participating in this coalition.

Does the member think that participation in this coalition is misguided? After all, this coalition is made up of 60 countries that are focused on humanitarian assistance and military services.

**Mr. François Lapointe:** Mr. Speaker, I think it was my NDP colleague from St. John's East who set the record straight earlier because the members opposite kept saying that Canada was the country that had invested the most in humanitarian aid. Now suddenly we are in fifth place. Good work. We are finally getting a little bit of transparency. I want to thank my NDP colleague for setting the record straight. We are in fifth place.

I have the numbers here. There are crying needs. As a result of what is happening, there are hundreds of thousands of new refugees every day. There is an urgent need for aid with respect to water, sanitation, hygiene and food security. Shelter and health care are lacking. Canada has contributed nearly \$67 million in this regard. That is good, but we have contributed over \$160 million to the military effort. We are putting three times more resources into sending military jets over there than we are into meeting the humanitarian needs of these people. I would like to take this opportunity to remind the House that Norway, South Korea and other countries are doing the opposite. Some countries have contributed to the transportation of weapons and things like that, but they have put most of their resources into responding to the huge humanitarian crisis caused by the Islamic State's barbaric actions.

I would like to come back to the last comment that I made in my speech, because my colleague spoke about the coalition. If the current Prime Minister of Canada said that he thought we needed to take military action, I still would not agree with him. However, if he did a world tour, showed the kind of leadership that one would expect from a real leader, spoke to the leaders of NATO, the UN, Germany and China, and sought support, then I could at least respect him, but that is not at all what he is doing right now.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as members know, the Liberal caucus will be voting against the motion. However, Canada has a clear interest in training Iraqi forces to fight and destroy ISIL. We can and should do this training away from the front lines. What is the position of NDP on that issue?

• (2200)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Lapointe:** Mr. Speaker, quite honestly, I missed the beginning of my colleague's remarks. There was something wrong with the interpretation.

When we supported the first motion, for example, we supported the notion of helping with the transport of weapons, which logistically speaking could help the Kurds. The Kurds are having a very difficult time because they really are on the front lines.

Consequently, we are not saying that there is nothing we can do to help in terms of the logistics. What we are saying is that boots on the ground and air strikes have absolutely not been effective and will solve nothing. We were not completely against the idea of logistical support, for example. I remember that it was in the motion.

*Government Orders*

This resonates with me. When the Conservatives have an easy solution to a complex issue, most of the time the fundamental problem is that it is the wrong solution. We are dealing with a complex problem. We are not against a nuanced position, but we are not going to play the Conservatives' games. The Liberals are going to vote for this motion. For three months they said that is not a good idea, but now they will support it. That is really so absurd.

[English]

**Hon. Tim Uppal (Minister of State (Multiculturalism), CPC):**  
Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to speak to this very important motion.

The so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, ISIL, and jihadi terrorists have declared war on us and pose a real threat. They have targeted Canada specifically, are urging supporters to attack disbelieving Canadians in any manner, vowing that we should not feel secure, even in our own homes.

As a government, we know that our ultimate responsibility is to protect Canadians from those who would do us and our families harm. That is why Canada is not and will not sit on the sidelines. ISIL has committed heinous acts of brutality against religious minority communities in Iraq and the region. The world watched in shock and horror as tens of thousands of Yazidis were stranded on Mount Sinjar last August after fleeing ISIL en masse under threat of torture, enslavement and death. While many of those Yazidis have since been relocated to safety, ISIL continues to seek out and violently persecute the region's diverse and ancient minority religious communities.

Just recently, ISIL abducted over 220 Assyrian Christians in eastern Syria. Their fate is still unknown and their disappearance, coupled with the worsening state of safety and security in the region, has forced over 1,000 Assyrian Christian families to vacate their homes in fear. This is part of a much wider campaign by ISIL to expel or destroy all those who oppose its warped ideology of division and hate, including Shia and moderate Sunni Muslims.

This extends into ISIL's destruction of Iraq's religious and cultural heritage, where it has targeted sites of shared significance to the Christian, Muslim and broader Arab communities in Iraq. ISIL has sought to destroy the inherent religious diversity Iraq has maintained for hundreds of years and to erase the history of a region known as the cradle of civilization.

Earlier this year, ISIL desecrated the ancient city of Hatra, a UNESCO world heritage site. It ransacked and vandalized the Mosul Museum, destroying hundreds of irreplaceable Assyrian artifacts. Last July, it demolished Jonah's Tomb in Mosul, a site revered by both the local Christians and Muslim communities.

The realities faced by Iraqi Christians epitomizes the severity of ISIL's brutal campaign of persecution. Hundreds of thousands of Christians have fled their homes, joining an estimated 2.4 million now displaced by the violence. By some estimates, the near total disappearance of Christians from the region is unfolding. Should ISIL's campaign against Iraq's religious minorities continue unencumbered, the fate of the Christian population in Iraq could mirror that of the Jewish community in Iraq, which dwindled from approximately 135,000 in 1948 to less than 100 today.

From an estimated population of 1.3 million Christians in Iraq in 2003, some estimates now put the number of Christians remaining in Iraq at approximately 130,000. ISIL threatens to wipe out the region's pluralism, rooted in the presence of faith communities of diverse creeds living together side by side for millennia. The maintaining of such diversity is crucial for lasting stability.

Without tolerance and respect for religious diversity in Iraq, the chance of building a democratic country grounded in the rule of law is greatly diminished. Iraq's religious minorities have also been targeted under a horrific campaign of sexual and gender-based violence. Unspeakable acts of rape, sexual enslavement and forced marriage against women, girls and boys have been perpetrated by ISIL in the territories it holds.

Canada has been a strong supporter of international efforts to end sexual violence and conflict. Such barbaric acts are an affront to human dignity and Canadian values, and add to the urgency of the call to stop ISIL and re-establish peace and security in the region. The twisted, hateful ideology that motivates ISIL is spreading like a cancer. It is fuelling violence in East Africa, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and throughout the Middle East.

● (2205)

While our government has rightly directed the Canadian military to support our friends and allies in stopping ISIL's advance on the ground, military force alone cannot root out the long-term threat posed by jihadi extremism. Extremism flourishes in an environment without respect and tolerance for religious diversity and religious difference. Legal and social restrictions on religious freedoms, including the prohibitions against blasphemy and apostasy that we have been seeing elsewhere in Muslim-majority countries cannot be allowed to take hold in Iraq; not just because they infringe on the rights of Christians and other minorities to practise their faith, but because they discourage the liberalizing voices within Islam that are crucial to countering the influence of the extremists in the long term.

This is precisely why the government has committed to advancing freedom of religion as a central component of our response to the situation in Iraq. Through the Office of Religious Freedoms, we will be working over the medium and long term to promote interfaith dialogue, to encourage understanding and respect among Iraq's religious communities, and to help build a political and social framework that allows all Iraqis to express their faith freely and without fear.

To that end, the Office of Religious Freedoms has been working diligently to identify and implement initiatives to assist in these efforts. Through the religious freedom fund, the office is supporting a two-year project with minority rights groups internationally that will increase the capacity of local Iraqi civil society organizations to monitor and respond to violations of religious freedom, as well as assist religious communities of all faiths to access vital services.

*Government Orders*

We will also continue reaching out to our friends and allies to build recognition for the important role religious freedom will play in ensuring long-term sustainable peace in Iraq. Our Ambassador for Religious Freedom, Dr. Andrew Bennett, continues to conduct outreach with Canadian Iraqi religious leaders to identify how best to help Iraq's religious communities under threat and support longer-term religious tolerance and freedom. Ambassador Bennett has also held fruitful discussions in the region with a number of faith-based organizations to explore opportunities for partnership with Canada on the ground.

As a multicultural and multi-faith society, Canada is uniquely qualified to promote the peaceful coexistence of Iraq's various religious and ethnic communities. We have a rich and proud tradition of diversity, respect, and tolerance, a tradition that has yielded peace and prosperity for Canadians. Through our engagement in Iraq, we will honour this tradition by acting against hate and persecution, by championing the values of pluralism and religious freedom and ultimately keeping Canadians safer here at home.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague's speech and noted his deep compassion and concern for ethnic and religious minorities.

However, in my opinion, there was a problem. Does he really believe that by bombing left, right and centre we will truly be able to engender tolerance and diversity? Is that how we want to go about it? Or will this only give rise to further intolerance?

• (2210)

[*English*]

**Hon. Tim Uppal:** Mr. Speaker, this is kind of the main difference between the opposition side and the government side in this case. We on the government side believe that we can do both, that we can secure security and still work on humanitarian issues that continue, after there is security in the region, to then work and develop the nation further, and to help the nation further.

At this point, with the security there in Iraq and the movement of ISIL, where it has gone now into Syria, we need to first move in with our military, our air forces, and support our allies to ensure the security of the region, and then we can move on with humanitarian assistance. Even right now, we are supporting with humanitarian assistance where we can. We are providing emergency shelters and medical assistance to thousands of Iraqi civilians in addition to large-scale financial assistance to other governments in the region impacted by the crisis in Syria.

We have the ability to do both things: create security and help in the humanitarian way as well.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the remarks from my hon. colleague. I have been hoping for an opportunity to put to him some of the briefing notes that were prepared for our former minister of foreign affairs who has now left the House, John Baird. Over a period of time from 2012 forward, the briefing notes to the minister warned that Syria is not Libya, that getting involved in Syria had different risks. I will quote from them:

There is no Security Council mandate for international military intervention. The Arab League has not called for intervention nor has the Syrian opposition....

...military option not viable, would likely worsen situation.

All of the above factors remain true. There is no UN Security Council resolution. There is no request from the Arab League. There is no request from the Syrian opposition. Could the hon. minister tell us why the government currently believes that a military operation is viable when it had been warned for many years by the Department of Foreign Affairs that it is not?

**Hon. Tim Uppal:** Mr. Speaker, at no time have we ever said that we were going to get involved in the Syrian civil war. That war would require a much different approach.

What we are dealing with in the motion in front of us today is the expansion and extension of our mission against ISIL. Whereas ISIL was in Iraq, it has moved some of its assets and bases farther into Syria, so we are joining our allies to also move into Syria. There are more than 60 partners with whom we are working. We are joining the U.S., Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Morocco, and the United Arab Emirates, who are already conducting strikes in Syria. It is important that we join those partners in fighting against ISIL.

**Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to know if the member would elaborate quickly on this. If ISIS is able to establish its caliphate in eastern Syria and Iraq, not only what type of situation that would bring to peace and security in the region but also how it might affect us here in Canada?

**Hon. Tim Uppal:** Mr. Speaker, allowing ISIL to create a strong base in that region would obviously affect that region in such a brutal manner. We have already seen what it is doing now, and it can only get worse, also for us here at home in Canada where ISIL has directly asked Canadians to attack non-believers within our country. We see situations where we have Canadians who have gone over and trained with ISIL and are trying to come back to Canada. We have the mission against ISIL, which is important. We also have legislation being brought forward in the House now to help us protect Canada before terrorist attacks happen. This is a multi-pronged approach and it is very important to keep Canadians safe.

• (2215)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, here we are six months later, once again talking about extending the mission. What has happened in the past six months? One outcome has been clear: the progress of Daesh has been slowed.

In all honesty, however, in six months and with 60 countries involved, there has not been much progress on the ground. The Kurds won the battle for Kobani. For the first time since June 2014, when the Iraqis fled Mosul, Iraqi forces engaged in attacking Tikrit. However, as we speak, they have decided to stop their advance.

If we look at what is happening right now with the government motion, the strategy seems simple: charge in and see what happens later. There does not appear to be a long-term vision here.

*Government Orders*

One of the things we have heard over and over, but bears repeating, is the question of whether air strikes in Syria are lawful. When our military allies are not at risk—and for Canada, that means NATO—we cannot go into a country unless it invites us to do so, or a resolution is adopted by the United Nations Security Council. At this time, of course, those criteria do not apply. In fact, despite the fancy footwork of the Minister of National Defence regarding section 51, everyone recognizes that we are not in a situation of legitimate defence, but rather in a pre-emptive war, which is quite different. In his speech, even the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness said that the tragic attacks against Canada, which we deplore, were inspired by Daesh. They were not perpetrated by Daesh, but inspired by that group, which is an important distinction.

As for the mission itself, the mandate before us is not clear. We have a mission, but we know nothing about the objectives or the strategies. However, we do know the Conservative government's strategy at home in Canada, namely to twist Canadians' arms. The government presents something small, plays with words and then things escalate. That is the government's technique. That is a problem because we do not really know where this is leading us. I would remind the House that this is not the first time the West is intervening in that part of the world. There is a risk of getting stuck there.

What has happened in Iraq since 2003? Of course, Saddam Hussein left, as everyone remembers. I am not saying I would have wanted someone like him to come back, that is not the issue, but what followed his departure was chaos and violence. In fact, the Americans and a coalition went to Iraq to take down a dictator. They stayed there for almost 10 years and after all that, the situation is worse than ever. Are we to believe that using the same recipe is going to lead us to a different outcome?

I have not heard much about what we are going to do once we take care of the Islamic State. History tells us that time and again, violence escalates. Everyone is thinking about ways to thwart the Islamic State's plans, to get rid of all this, but no one is thinking about how to bring stability back to that region.

• (2220)

I would now like to talk about geopolitics in that corner of the world. A few days ago, former general Petraeus, who commanded the American forces in 2007-08, called the conflict zone in Iraq and Syria a geopolitical Chernobyl. That is what he called it. We need to look at what we are getting into. We are talking about Iraq and Syria here, but we cannot forget neighbouring Turkey or, obviously, Iran.

There is also the religion aspect, which we do not hear much about, but it must be taken into account when we look at the different forces at play, whether we are talking about the Sunni, the Shia or the various religious minorities like Christians. There are also the Azerbaijanis. A religious war is not that far off in that part of the world, which could be even more damaging, if that were even possible.

There are also armed groups. Obviously, there are the Kurds. In Syria there is also Hezbollah, which is on the government list of terrorist organizations. It is funny to see that the government and Hezbollah currently have the same objectives in Syria. It is rather

bizarre. I know it is hard to swallow, but it is the truth. It is a question of opportunity, is it not?

There are also small ethnic groups we do not hear much about. These are the victims we do not hear about. For example, there are the Bedouin tribes. In the early days of Daesh, 500 Bedouins from one tribe were massacred in just one or two days. Did that make international headlines? No. Did anyone care about what had happened to them? No, of course not, because they are herders. No one took an interest in them, but they paid a very high price in blood.

We are also seeing something else going on. I am referring to what is going on in Yemen. People forget to connect things. Right now, major cities in Yemen are under siege by a minority Shia group called the Houthis.

There is a coalition led by Saudi Arabia, our ally in Iraq and Syria. It is currently bringing some unusual pressure tactics to bear. Saudi Arabia has 150,000 troops at the moment in an operation with 100 fighter jets. The United Arab Emirates have 30 planes. Bahrain and Kuwait have 15 each, and Qatar has 10. The other countries in the coalition are Egypt, Jordan, Sudan, Pakistan and Morocco. There is a religious context to this because behind the Houthi minority are the Iranians, who themselves also support Shia militias in Iraq as well as Hezbollah and the Syrian government.

With all of those ingredients in the mix, we are approaching something truly catastrophic on a planetary scale. Given the number of Muslims on the planet, the context is very difficult. Has the government taken all of that into account? Absolutely not.

Bombs cannot resolve such a complicated conflict. I do not believe they can. To ease its conscience, the government has been talking more and more about humanitarian aid. What that means is that the Conservatives are not very comfortable with their own position.

Let us think about this. Right now, are we really protecting a religious ethnic minority that has found refuge in Iraq? Not really. Have we created safe places to protect them? Not really.

• (2225)

If the government had chosen the NDP's approach six months ago, would things be any different on the ground? Would minorities be better protected? I think so.

In conclusion, I think that the government's approach—embarking on a crusade—is juvenile, immoral, dangerous and irresponsible.

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if I am not mistaken, I think the member used the word “crusade”. If that is the case, I hope that, as a reasonable member, he will withdraw it. It is very delicate and irresponsible to use such a word in this context.



*Government Orders*

The member asked if we have created safe places for religious or ethnic minorities in Iraq. The answer of course is no, because Daesh still controls the Nineveh Plains, the central region of northern Iraq, which is the historic home of the Christians, Assyrians, Yazidis and all those small minority groups.

Furthermore, I am very familiar with that diaspora in Canada. There representatives were here this week. All of those communities and minorities being persecuted by Daesh in Iraq support the use of military force against Daesh, because they understand that there is no other way to win back their historic territories and create a safe place for those communities.

Why does the member not agree with the victims of Daesh?

**Mr. Denis Blanchette:** Mr. Speaker, I will respond in two parts. First, considering that this is a very sensitive issue, I have no problem withdrawing the word “crusade”.

As far as the hon. member's other question is concerned, everyone agrees that the Islamic State is evil. However, what we are saying is that there are enough members in our coalition to share the tasks. Canada, whose citizens are more sensitive, should do more in terms of providing humanitarian assistance. We have always said that.

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciated the speech the hon. member just delivered. He really understands the issues.

I would like to come back to the humanitarian aid issue. This evening, the Conservatives bragged about giving large sums of money, when they are giving only 5¢ a day to the 2.5 million refugees living in abject poverty.

What does my colleague think people can do with that 5¢ a day, when they need schools, hospitals, housing, tents, shelters and so forth? Is that enough money?

**Mr. Denis Blanchette:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his excellent question. No matter where in the world you live, 5¢ a day does not go very far. You cannot buy what you want.

You have to start with the basics in order to combat radicalization and eventually achieve peace. You must first meet people's basic needs. As I was saying earlier in response to the previous question, it is important to enhance this aspect of the international collective effort.

It seems easy to invest in bombs and much more difficult to invest in humanitarian aid. When the immediate crisis has been resolved, everyone will forget the ongoing humanitarian crisis. At that point, new hotbeds of radicalization will be created and we must avoid that.

• (2230)

[English]

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this debate, which addresses the Prime Minister's announcement of a motion to debate an extension and expansion of Canada's military mission against ISIL.

Earlier today, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness explained in detail to the House that ISIL has indeed targeted Canada and Canadians by name. Just a few hours ago, we heard from Canada's Minister of National Defence about the devastation ISIL has caused in the Middle East and the magnitude of the problem if we permit ISIL to continue to perpetuate such atrocities not only in the Middle East but around the world. He explained the threat it poses right here at home in Canada to all of us as Canadians.

As the Prime Minister said, we cannot protect Canada and our communities by simply choosing to ignore this threat. I was concerned by the remarks of both the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Liberal Party. While the Prime Minister outlined the grave threat ISIL poses to Canada and the international community as a whole, both leaders of the opposition parties refused to even acknowledge it. It is evident that they do not take the threat of jihadist terrorism against Canadians seriously, even when it has already struck us at the very core of our democratic institution, right here in Canada's Parliament.

Both opposition leaders and their parties are woefully unprepared to take the steps necessary to protect Canadians. On this side of the House, we will fight to thwart this threat against us and will help in the protection of millions of innocent lives caught on the front lines of this conflict.

It is important to note that while our government is contributing to the military mission against ISIL, Canada is also among the top humanitarian and development assistance donors in both Iraq and Syria.

As we consider Canada's involvement in the international mission against the Islamic extremist jihadist group known as ISIL, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, it is important that we take into account its effect on our government's efforts to resettle refugees. Indeed, the ongoing violence in the region has led to a high number of refugees and forcibly displaced persons, not to mention indiscriminate, shocking, and horrific brutality toward civilians. Our government has been, and will continue to be, a world leader in permanently resettling refugees.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Refugee Agency have described the ongoing catastrophe as the largest humanitarian crisis in a generation. Both the violence in the region and its accompanying refugee crisis are utterly tragic situations.

Our country has a long history and a great humanitarian tradition of providing protection for those who have been persecuted on the basis of their religion, their ethnicity, their group identity, or their political beliefs and have had to flee their homelands.

*Government Orders*

This tradition of refugee protection predates Confederation. Canada was a place of refuge for slaves fleeing the United States in the 18th and 19th centuries, and later for Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians, among others, fleeing oppression in eastern Europe in the late 1800s. In the second half of the 20th century, Canada welcomed thousands of Hungarians and Czechs who had escaped Soviet tyranny. More recently, we have brought in refugees from Africa and the Middle East. Now, we have been called upon to help with the ongoing crisis in Syria and Iraq.

It is because of this crisis that the world is now witnessing a level of forced displacement that we have not seen in decades. Canada is answering that call.

• (2235)

Earlier this year my colleague, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, announced that Canada would resettle an additional 10,000 Syrian refugees over the next three years on top of our 2013 commitment of 1,300 resettled spaces for Syrian refugees. This new commitment represents 10% of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' appeal to help resettle 100,000 Syrian refugees, and it is in keeping with Canada's record of resettling one in ten of the world's resettled refugees.

The minister also announced that Canada would resettle an additional 3,000 Iraqi refugees, bringing our total Iraqi resettlement commitment to 23,000 Iraqi refugees resettled in Canada since 2009.

We have met this commitment by already resettling more than 20,000 Iraqi refugees since 2009, the vast majority of these refugees have been resettled out of Syria. We have also committed to resettle 5,000 additional refugees from Turkey, a commitment that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration made in his visit to Turkey a couple of years ago.

This morning I heard the member for Vancouver Quadra speak, and I was troubled to hear her say that we had not provided any new humanitarian aid. As I previously mentioned, on January 7, the Minister of International Development and the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration announced increased humanitarian effort and that Canada would accept additional refugees from the region. I have also heard in this debate that we need to give more humanitarian aid, not military intervention.

The military actions our government is proposing today do not preclude humanitarian action. This is not a case of either/or. It is a case, indeed, of both, and Canada, this government, is stepping up to the plate.

These commitments are in keeping with Canada's long-standing and well-respected international reputation for generosity, for humanitarianism and leadership in providing protection to the world's most vulnerable people. Indeed, since the Second World War, Canadians have provided refuge to more than one million people.

Given our relatively small population, we have reason to be proud of Canada's record in resettling displaced and vulnerable people around the world, and we are pleased to be able to continue to do that with the support of the Canadian people.

Today, we maintain one of the world's largest and most generous resettlement programs, welcoming one in ten refugees resettled worldwide, more than almost any other industrialized nation in the world.

I would like to take a moment to talk about my personal experience that occurred last year. I had the opportunity to travel with our Prime Minister to Israel and Jordan. When we arrived in Jordan, a number of colleagues and I had the opportunity to visit a crossing point from Syria into Jordan. As it happened, we were there no more than 20 minutes when the sirens went off. We looked out into the desert. We were right on the line there, and sure enough, about 150 people were walking across the desert after having walked three days through the desert to find Jordan, to find a place of refuge.

I had the opportunity to speak with some of these people, to hug them, to aid them and to see how much humanitarian aid we did provide, through different programs through international aid in Canada and through our partners in Jordan, to those people, and the importance of that assistance to them.

I was moved to know that our government permanently resettles and assists the world's most vulnerable individuals, as the refugees I witnessed crossing into Jordan.

As a Canadian, I am very proud of our compassionate traditions. I am glad I have had the opportunity to discuss Canada's remarkable efforts to resettle in the context of today's important debate. I am proud to stand in support of our government's extended military effort against ISIL, and infinitely proud to stand in support of our brave men and women in our armed forces who serve our country today.

• (2240)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on my colleague's speech.

First, he began by saying that the Leader of the Opposition did not even recognize the threat posed by the Islamic State. To say such a thing is tantamount to admitting that he has not followed the debate in the House or that he only hears what he wants to hear. The Leader of the Opposition has recognized the threat that this group represents on several occasions. Not only has he recognized the threat to Canada and Canadians, but he has also recognized the government's duty to protect the people and help achieve international peace and security. That has to be said.

Second, the parliamentary secretary spoke about the aid provided by Canada to Syria. Since we are talking about it, we should point out that it was not until this week that the government honoured its two-year-old pledge to take in 1,000 Syrian refugees. We should also point that out.

The question I have for my colleague is this: what responsibility does he believe the UN has and what international rights are involved in Canada's participation in a war? Is the UN just a nice symbol that serves only to protect national monuments or does it also have a role and a say in a country's decision as to whether or not to participate in an armed conflict as significant as the one we are facing?

*Government Orders*

[*English*]

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Speaker, first, the member came in defence of her leader, the leader of the official opposition. On CBC, he said all that was asked of Canada by the Iraqis was help with the humanitarian crisis. It is totally and clearly a false statement. How a leader of a political party in Canada, who was here the day we had that intrusion by a terrorist who killed a very bright, young soldier with a future, Corporal Nathan Cirillo, not a stone's throw away from Parliament Hill, could make a comment like that is beyond logic.

It is important that all members of the House set aside their partisan lines and party positions. It is important for us to realize what we are dealing with here. We are dealing with a jihadist movement that has declared war on our country and on Canadians. It is incumbent upon us as parliamentarians to do something about that. The members of the opposition need to reflect on their actions because, truthfully, I believe it is shameful.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party came to make its decision to vote against the motion based on four principles articulated last fall.

First, Canada has a role to play in confronting humanitarian crises in the world. Second, when a government considers deploying our men and women in uniform, there must be a clear mission and a clear role for Canada. Third, the case for deploying our forces must be made openly and transparently based on clear, reliable, dispassionately presented facts. Fourth, Canada's role must reflect the broad scope of the Canadian capabilities in how best we can help. Obviously, the government has fallen short.

The question I have for the member is quite specific. The Minister of Foreign Affairs compares this war to Afghanistan, which implies that it could be a 10-year war. What does the member believe? How long does the member believe this war will go on?

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Speaker, I need to point out a couple of key elements that I think elude my hon. colleague opposite.

The international jihadist movement has declared war on Canada. We are talking about an organization that just a few months ago lined up 21 Coptic Christians after having beaten them, tied their hands and feet behind their backs, the terrorists hid their own faces and proceeded to behead them.

Canadians are not fooled. We all know the Liberal Party does not support this mission. The Liberal position on combatting ISIL, this threat, is typical of that party. Once again, those members have their feet firmly planted in thin air. They should stop looking at their own internal polls and see what is important for that region and what is important for Canadians.

We are talking about a jihadist movement that has declared barbaric war on families and is displacing people from their homes by the tens of thousands.

• (2245)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is 10:45 p.m., and I am pleased and proud to rise in the House today.

As a new parliamentarian—even though I have been here four years now—I think that this is a very important debate. We are

talking about a mission of war that Canada wants to continue overseas.

When we think about the impact of this war, we need to think about the men and women in uniform that we are sending abroad, because they are going to be risking their lives and making every possible sacrifice to keep our country safe. We therefore have to wonder exactly what they will be doing.

Unfortunately, when we asked the government questions about that six months ago, when it decided to send our men and women in uniform to fight abroad, the mission was not clearly defined. When we asked clear questions about the mission to find out what our soldiers would be doing there, the government said that the mission would simply involve assistance, advice and support. It was never meant to be a combat mission.

Today, we know that our soldiers are unfortunately facing fire. Our men and women in uniform who are there have to protect themselves and fire on the enemy. They are very close to the fighting. What is more, we have unfortunately lost a soldier, who was killed by friendly fire, even though there was nothing friendly about it.

This decision goes way beyond the intention that the government claimed to have initially, when it said that we were only there to provide advice. Even then, we were opposed to this mission. I was very proud of the NDP's position and I still am. We proposed that, instead, Canada focus its efforts on humanitarian aid, since we know that this conflict is having a serious impact.

I heard my colleagues opposite saying that the NDP is not taking the threat seriously. On the contrary, we are. However, the solution the NDP is proposing is very different from the Conservatives' solution.

Our amendment to the motion is very clear, so I will not get into the details of our proposals, but we think the most important thing is ending the participation of Canadian troops in combat, air strikes and the advise-and-assist training in Iraq and Syria as soon as possible. I am proud of our position.

I got into politics for a number of reasons. The first was Canada's involvement in Afghanistan when Jean Chrétien's Liberals were in power. I am actually a little disappointed that we have not heard from our Liberal colleagues because I had a lot of questions for them. Unfortunately, all we have heard from them is questions. We have not had a chance to hear them explain their position in speeches, nor have we been able to ask them questions, and I am very disappointed about that.

Let us remember that it was the Liberals who sent Canada to Afghanistan. They did pretty much what George Bush did after the events of September 11, 2001, which shocked not only Canadians but the whole world. They reacted by sending our troops to fight in Afghanistan.

*Government Orders*

The Liberals are so proud of themselves for not getting involved in Iraq. The Prime Minister, who was a member of the opposition at the time, wanted to get involved in Iraq. However, all these years later, it has become clear that getting involved there was a mistake.

To illustrate the Liberals' doublespeak, during the last election, the Liberal candidate I was debating admitted that the mission in Afghanistan was a mistake.

In 2003, the Conservative government said that we had to intervene in Iraq because there were weapons of mass destruction there.

● (2250)

Then they took our position. They realized that it was basically nonsense. Now they want to continue the war that we unfortunately did not wage at the time—or so the Conservatives say. They are very disappointed that we did not take part in it in 2003.

We need to think about the repercussions. Once again, perhaps it is because of my roots and my parents that I think this way. I often talk about the Vietnam War when I am addressing the House, but that is also one of the reasons I am here in Canada. It is also one of the reasons I believe we need to learn from our past mistakes and from history. There was a war in Vietnam, which was bombed all over the place. The question we need to ask is whether, in the end, that was a good way to help the people. If you were to go there today and ask the Vietnamese people if they were happy to have a war and be bombed, if it helped their society, many would say no.

That is a question we need to ask ourselves now. We need to learn from our mistakes. I do not know whether my colleagues opposite or anyone can say that it was a really great thing for us to go into Afghanistan. There were 160 Canadian soldiers who lost their lives over there. Thousands of soldiers were wounded and they still suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder back at home in Canada. Was that a good thing? That is why I am very disappointed that we were not able to have this debate with the Liberals, whom I unfortunately did not hear from tonight. However, apart from the partisan side of this whole debate, the fundamental question we must ask ourselves as members of Parliament is whether this is the best course of action. What is the best option?

I can understand the Conservatives who say that they want to protect the people in Iraq. However, it is very simplistic to say that dropping bombs will fix the situation. The other side has been talking about humanitarian assistance. Canada is providing assistance, but it is not much compared to what is being invested in the military, with all of the consequences and devastation.

One thing we cannot forget and that is rarely mentioned here in the House, especially on the government side, is what we call collateral damage. How many people will die as a result of a bombing? We apparently have all the new technology and, by some miracle, the government thinks that there will be no impact. I am not just talking about the innocent people who will die, the civilians, the men and women. The damage extends to the entire families that will have to live with this.

The government tries to simplify everything when it talks about bombing some group. Initially, the government started by targeting Iraq, but now it is increasingly targeting Syria. What is the objective?

Just where will this deployment end up? That is what the government is not capable of answering. These questions make it obvious that the government does not have a clear vision.

We know—and the government has said it—that we are talking about years and years of war. I remind the House once again that we were in Afghanistan for 10 years. It was Canada's longest military mission. Can we truly say that with pride? Can we truly say that we managed to fix the problem? Is this really the solution?

The government is asking for a one-year extension. It initially talked about six months, but now it is one year. We are getting ourselves into a quagmire.

That is why we are saying that right now we need to be looking at humanitarian assistance and how we can truly help people. The simplistic solution is to drop bombs, but that will not fix the problem.

I am expecting some attacks, and we have already heard some. I remind members that the mission in Libya had the support of the UN and the NDP went along with it. However, we did not support the government's decision to go further.

● (2255)

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am again hearing in this speech the NDP's empty rhetoric and the pacifist ideology that refuses to consider the complexity of the situation. He is talking about a simplistic approach based on dropping bombs.

[*English*]

Does he really think that the approach of Canada or the 24 other allies involved in military action against this genocidal terrorist organization is just randomly to send bombs, or as one of the NDP MPs said to bomb here and there, bomb east and west? This is the House of Commons. This place deserves a serious debate, not just a bunch of slogans from protest signs.

Of course we do not believe that military action alone can resolve the problem of this emerging caliphate. However, we also are realistic enough to understand that while military action is not sufficient, it is necessary. It is necessary, to push ISIL back, away from the territory that it has gained so that the indigenous people of those areas can go back to their homes and live, one hopes, one day with security and peace.

My question for the member is this. I have posed this to a number of New Democratic MPs and none of them has even come within a mile of answering it. Every organization in Canada representing the Assyrian, Chaldean, Mandeian, Yazidi, Iraqi Canadian communities support military action against ISIL. Is this member willing to meet with them and tell them that they are all wrong?

**Mr. Hoang Mai:** I would love to meet with anyone who wants to talk about it. I would love to explain my position, and that is what I did tonight. We all have different solutions. That is why I am very proud of the position that the NDP has taken. I invite the minister to read the amendment that was proposed. I hope the minister will actually look at it and realize what we are proposing here.

*Government Orders*

There are different visions in terms of how we can solve a problem and obviously from the other side yes, it is true that the Conservatives want to send troops.

[*Translation*]

On this side of the House, we want to bring our Canadian Armed Forces home. The UN, among others, talked about solutions. Why not tackle funding directly? The Conservatives did not talk about that solution. We know that the Islamic State makes money by selling oil. Why not target that specifically? That is one way to cut them off. Why not address the radicalization taking place here? That is what we are proposing. These are solutions. It is not as simple as the minister claims.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do take exception to the member's comments in terms of the Liberal Party's absence, what he refers to as being absent in terms of contribution to the debate. As the deputy House leader and a member who has served in the Canadian Forces, I have been deeply engaged in this process. We have had several members who have been speaking and asking questions in regard to the motion.

When the member wants to ask a question, I am always happy to provide answers to the member. He makes reference to Afghanistan and Iraq. I think Canadians as a whole are very appreciative of the role that the former prime minister Jean Chrétien played. When they use hindsight it is wonderful, but Canadians were very supportive of Mr. Chrétien's role in Afghanistan.

Might the member want to acknowledge the fact that the UN and NATO played a very critical role in encouraging Canada's involvement in Afghanistan. Were the UN and NATO wrong?

• (2300)

**Mr. Hoang Mai:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for being here tonight. It is true that he is very hard-working. If we look at his record, he would be the one who probably speaks the most in the House, and I would like to congratulate him for that.

It is true that he talks a lot for his party. However, when we are here to have a debate and ask questions, unfortunately we are not hearing from everyone on that side with respect to what they have to put forward.

On the member's question, we were against the war in Afghanistan. That is why I got involved with the NDP. The member's position is why I actually got into politics. The fact that Canada went to war in Afghanistan is why I am here as a NDP member and that is why I am in politics. It is their vision that I didn't agree with, and that is why I got into politics.

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in the House on behalf of the people of Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon to speak in favour of the government motion to extend and expand the military mission against the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIL.

Like the previous speaker, I count it a great privilege to stand in this House of Commons to debate a motion like this, which is something that has been unique in this country since our government came to power. The Liberal Party never put motions like this before

the House for its support. Certainly I am proud to be part of a government that does.

Since early last year, ISIL has cut a wide swath of ethnic cleansing, massacres, assassinations, abductions, rapes, kidnappings, and destruction across parts of Iraq and Syria. It wears its heinous crimes as badges of honour and broadcasts its barbarism widely in order to try to win depraved individuals over to its jihadist terrorist cause. ISIL speaks openly of wanting to establish a cross-border caliphate stretching from India to the south of Spain.

As the Minister of National Defence has mentioned, before the international community of 24 nations from North America, Europe, the Middle East, and around the world stepped in to militarily assist Iraqi and Kurdish security forces, ISIL was operating in the region with impunity. It was rolling across the region and wiping out anything and anyone in its path that did not conform to its twisted ideology.

While efforts to degrade ISIL's capabilities to operate in the open have proven successful, jihadi terrorism continues to threaten vulnerable minority communities in the Middle East. ISIL also continues to pose a danger to the security of Canada, as is evidenced by its attempts to establish a region from which it can launch and inspire further international attacks and by naming Canada specifically as a target in multiple directives to its followers.

When Canadians are threatened by terrorism, the Government of Canada will act. Canadians support the mission against ISIL, as do the vast majority of my constituents, who have taken the time to indicate that they are overwhelmingly in favour of Canada's military action against ISIL because they believe that civilized nations of the world must not remain on the sidelines when a threat of this nature presents itself.

I followed the debate today closely, and unfortunately many opposition members have chosen to focus on everything but the mission outlined in this motion. That is why we are here: to talk about why this mission is so necessary and why Canada must do its part and engage with our allies to say that we and other civilized, capable, and free nations will not stand idly by while genocide is perpetrated against so many innocents.

Allow me to focus for a few moments on one example of ISIL's actions in Iraq so that all members might understand the gravity of what is taking place.

ISIL is systematically targeting communities and individuals who do not share its twisted, fanatical beliefs. Entire religious minority communities are at risk of disappearing forever under the tyranny of ISIL. Nowhere is this clearer than on the Nineveh plains, where Christian communities dating back to the time of the first apostles are being systematically erased from the landscape. These Christians are among the last people on earth still using Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus Christ. It is estimated that 100,000 Christians have been driven from their ancestral lands. Religious artifacts have also been desecrated, and ancient manuscripts dating to the first century have been destroyed by ISIL.

*Government Orders*

In a disturbing parallel to the Nazi practice of marking property owned by Jews, ISIL marked the homes of Christians in Mosul, one of Iraq's largest cities, with the Arabic letter "N" for Nazara, an early Islamic term for Christians. Once identified, Christians were given the choice to convert to radical Islam, pay a massive fine, or face death by the sword. Most chose to flee for their lives.

Canon Andrew White, known as the vicar of Baghdad, has described the situation in Iraq as "the worst reality of religious persecution since the Holocaust."

Amnesty International investigator Donatella Rovera has said:

The massacres and abductions being carried out by the Islamic State provide harrowing new evidence that a wave of ethnic cleansing against minorities is sweeping across northern Iraq.

William Youmaran, president of the Assyrian American National Federation, made the following comments, which all members of this House would be wise to heed. He said:

We understand that not all peoples see the tremendous religious and regional implications of such a loss, but if the world community no longer fear the judgment of God, let us all fear the judgment of history for failing to act at this critical and dire moment for millions in the Middle East.

● (2305)

The crimes against these Christians are just one example of the unspeakable acts that ISIL has perpetrated in Iraq and Syria. We are all aware of the others: rape being used as a weapon of war, women and children being sold into slavery, beheadings, people burned alive in cages.

Canadians have seen these images and read these stories. They know that evil like this cannot be confronted armed only with strongly worded resolutions or good intentions. That is why they support targeted military action against ISIL.

At the same time that we participated in these types of military strikes in Iraq, Canada was and is one of the largest humanitarian donors to Iraq and displaced Syrians. This is not an either-or proposition. Canada was among the first to recognize and address the significant needs of the Iraqis and Syrians affected by ISIL's reign of terror in the region.

As the Prime Minister said in his address to this House on Tuesday, over the last six months we have helped feed 1.7 million people in Iraq, provide shelter and relief supplies to 1.25 million people, and give some education to at least half a million children. We provided support to the over 200,000 Syrian refugees in Iraq with food, water, shelter, and protection.

What the opposition fails to recognize is that aid cannot be delivered without security and security cannot exist in an environment where aid workers are routinely taken as hostages and decapitated in front of the cameras, nor are we satisfied to merely offer a hot meal or a warm coat to those who happen to escape the clutches of ISIL. We believe Canada's obligation to a vulnerable population is to prevent refugees and displaced persons from being created in the first place.

Canada has never been afraid to do its part when it comes to the responsibility to protect innocents. We have done it throughout our history, and Canadians can be proud that we are doing so again.

It is clear that the depravity of ISIL knows no bounds. Barbaric practices such as stoning, crucifixions, torture, rape, and murder, including that of children, have become their common practices. It is also clear that if left unchecked, ISIL would pose a real and present danger to Canada and Canadians. ISIL spokesmen have praised the cowardly attack on Corporal Nathan Cirillo and Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent. They have encouraged others to conduct similar attacks here. They have made repeated and specific threats against our country and Canadians, and if allowed to establish their caliphate, they would use it as a base from which to launch terrorist attacks against us and our allies.

As long as Canada remains a pluralistic, tolerant, and open society where individuals are free to believe and worship, or not worship, in a manner of their own choosing, we will be a target of ISIL.

The world has been confronted by a group of jihadi terrorists, the likes of which we have never seen. ISIL will not stop committing atrocities until it is stopped by force, and we have been asked by the Iraqis to help provide it. That is why we must continue to work with our coalition partners to diminish and degrade the capacity of ISIL to operate in the open. We must not allow ISIL to establish a base from which it can launch further terrorist attacks. We must not allow ISIL to continue the barbaric assault on innocents without a response.

Canadians support this mission, and I am proud to support this motion in the House of Commons on their behalf.

● (2310)

**Mr. Tarik Brahmi (Saint-Jean, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite mentioned that Canada was directly attacked by ISIL. He mentioned the despicable crime against Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent.

However, the truth about the mentally disturbed individual who committed that despicable criminal act is that he did it because he was not able to make any connection to ISIL in Iraq or in Syria, and the reason for that was that he did not speak Arabic.

Although he tried for months to make connections with ISIL, he was so frustrated that eventually he decided, in a moment of craziness, to use his car and run into Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent.

It is a contradiction. The reason he committed this crime was that he was not able to connect with ISIL. He wanted to go to Iraq or Syria to fight. He was not able to get anyone in the local mosque to connect him with anyone abroad. That is the reason he committed this crime.

How does the member explain that contradiction?

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, what was committed was an act of terrorism in Parliament. That is clear from the tapes that have been released now.

What I said in my speech was that ISIL had used that attack and asked others to conduct similar attacks in the future. He was inspired by ISIL as well. I know those members want to talk about all these technicalities of was it terrorism, was it mental illness. There was a soldier shot in the back at the National War Memorial by a terrorist who was inspired by ISIL.

*Government Orders*

ISIL has used that incident and has said in particular that it wants others to do that again. This is the type of organization with which we are dealing. To think we can just wish it away, ignore it or let someone else deal with it, is irresponsible. Canadians want us to act. They overwhelmingly support the motion and the mission. I will be happy to support it as well.

**Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development for his passion on this matter and for his clear illustration of some of the atrocities that are being committed by ISIL, as well as clearly making the argument of how ISIL has inspired terrorist attacks here.

Could my colleague and friend talk a bit more about how dangerous it would be if we allowed ISIL to entrench and fortify itself in a caliphate in eastern Syria, headquartered in the city of Raqqa?

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence for his work today in this debate as well as for his support for our men and women in uniform.

If we allow ISIL to operate out in the open, as happened before the international military interventions, the attacks it would perpetrate in the region and internationally would just grow. Because of the air strikes in Iraq, it has now retreated across the border in Syria. That is why we have expanded the mission to allow Canadian pilots to target ISIL targets in Syria.

Giving ISIL unfettered access to a region where it can do whatever it wants, plan, train and carry out attacks, would be a disaster even greater than what is already there. We cannot stand by as an international community and let that happen.

• (2315)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Trottier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for La Francophonie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since last fall's debate about Canada's participation in the fight against the Islamic State, the threat that this vicious and repugnant organization poses to the region and western countries, including Canada, has persisted. This group continues to commit horrible acts of violence against innocent civilians and to threaten the safety of countries in the region and elsewhere.

The weekend of March 14 and 15 marked four years since the beginning of the conflict in Syria, a crisis resulting from President Bashar al-Assad's brutal repression of his own citizens. I wanted to mention that because the chaos and violence spawned by the Assad regime created an opening for the Islamic State to wade into the conflict and extend its reach. The Islamic State's disgusting and hateful persecution of civilians, ethnic minorities and religious groups in Iraq and Syria and the resulting humanitarian crisis make it clear that there is a need for strong intervention.

I am proud to say that Canada is getting involved on all fronts and that it is combining its diplomatic and military efforts with those of its partners in over 60 countries who share a common perspective. The air strikes and other deployments that the courageous members

of our armed forces are participating in are making an important contribution. Our soldiers deserve our unwavering support.

ISIL's horrific campaign of terror and violence has been tormenting the people of Iraq and Syria. It also threatens stability and security in the Middle East and beyond. Over the past few months, we have noticed that groups affiliated with ISIL in Libya and Egypt, and more recently Boko Haram, a group whose violence was unequalled before the emergence of ISIL, have pledged allegiance to that organization.

Countries in the region are more affected by the crisis and are working to overcome this serious humanitarian crisis by taking strong action. Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt have welcomed over two million refugees who have fled the war in Syria and the brutality of ISIL. Saudi Arabia has given hundreds of millions of dollars in humanitarian aid to help the Iraqis displaced by the conflict. Kuwait and other countries in the region are also providing humanitarian aid, and so are our western allies and many other stakeholders.

The barbaric acts perpetrated by ISIL demonstrate not only its total indifference to human rights, but also its absolute contempt for other cultures. Earlier this month in Iraq, ISIL deliberately destroyed the renowned historic site of Nimrud, which dates back over 3,000 years. ISIL is destroying not only Iraqi and Syrian archeological sites, but also cultural treasures that belong to us all.

I believe that we all agree on the need to fight with resolve against the threat that is the Islamic State, not just in Iraq and Syria, but also in the region and around the world. Canadians are guided by values such as peace, democracy, religious freedom and pluralism. We want everyone to be able to live in a free and democratic society based on respect for human rights and the rule of law. Canada supports the aspirations of the people of Iraq and Syria to establish stable and democratic societies that protect the fundamental rights of their people. They deserve our help in the fight against the Islamic State so that they can make progress in achieving this objective.

The fundamental question is this: how can we defeat the Islamic State and what is the best way to work together with our partners to help make the Middle East safe for everyone?

This question has been studied by our partners, the United States, Europe, Australia and New Zealand and, with more urgency, by the countries in the Middle East.

Last September, 10 countries in the Middle East and North Africa met in Jeddah in order to join the international coalition against the Islamic State. Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Bahrain joined the air campaign against the Islamic State in Syria a few weeks later.

*Government Orders*

• (2320)

Turkey, a NATO ally, decided not only to fight against the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, but also to give foreign troops access to its military bases for that purpose. Active participation of regional powers in the international coalition against the Islamic State is essential. What is more, their participation in air strikes helps to degrade the Islamic State group.

The participation of predominantly Muslim countries, such as Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, also helps to undermine the simplistic and twisted propaganda spread by the Islamic State holding that their opponents are enemies of Islam. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, religious Muslim leaders strongly denounce the Islamic State and its beliefs. The war waged by this group is not between Muslims and non-Muslims, or between Sunnis and Shiites. The number of countries and people opposed to the violent and extremist ideology of the Islamic State continues to grow, and includes a number of predominantly Sunni Muslim countries.

The Islamic State makes no secret of its expansionist designs. The threat it poses to Iraq's neighbours and Canada's friends in the region is not indirect. On the contrary, it is immediate and very direct, and is at their borders and even within their territories.

[English]

As we know, the issues of terrorism financing and the recruitment of foreign fighters that affect western countries are particularly acute in countries in the region. ISIL is not only actively recruiting fighters in several countries in the region, including in the Maghreb, where it has set up clandestine cells, but is reaching out to target young people well beyond the region. The cases of young people from North America and Europe being lured to join ISIL in Syria and Iraq are worrying, especially for their families.

The horrific threat posed by ISIL has drawn together nations from across the world, stretching over religious, ethnic, and geographic divides. ISIL's aims and ideology have generated near universal disgust among civilized peoples.

Iran and Syria claim to stand on the right side of history in the fight against ISIL, but make no mistake, Iran and Syria are not partners. It is the ideology and actions of these regimes that helped to create the conditions that have allowed ISIL to flourish. They do not stand for peace and stability. They stand with terror. They support sectarian forces across the Middle East, and they continue to persecute and deny the human rights and freedoms of their own citizens. Their violent aims further inflame sectarian divisions and continue to destabilize the region.

The Assad regime in Syria has for four years violated international law on many occasions. It can no longer be regarded as a legitimate member of the international community. As documented and widely reported, the regime has repeatedly unleashed the terror of chemical weapons against its own people, combatants and civilians alike.

ISIL continues to threaten Iraq and other states in the region from its bases in Syria. Canada will support the people of Syria in achieving their democratic aspirations and welcomes efforts aimed at ensuring that the Assad regime does not unduly benefit from efforts to combat ISIL in Syria.

A development of serious concern to Canada and its partners is the role Iran has assumed in Iraq over the past several months to fight ISIL with its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds force. Members may remember that the IRGC Quds force is a listed terrorist entity responsible for some of the deadliest terrorist attacks of the past decades. This force can only compromise and complicate efforts to bring long-term peace and stability to Iraq and the region. It is arming and directing Shia militias within Iraq and is undermining attempts by the new government to gain the trust of its Sunni population and to build an inclusive government in Baghdad.

This is no accident. An independent and inclusive government representative of Iraq's diverse communities would not be in Iran's interest. There is no way that Syria and Iran can be part of a peaceful long-term solution when they refuse to change their ways. They remain a large part of the problem.

Over four years ago, the forerunner of ISIL was considered defeated in Iraq. A lot has happened since then. The reality is that the only way to defeat ISIL definitively is to eliminate the conditions that have allowed it to grow. A just political solution to the war in Syria must be found, and the government of Bashar al-Assad must fully commit, in word and deed, to addressing Iraq's sectarian and ethnic divides.

We know that a stable, secure, and prosperous Iraq that embraces pluralism and religious diversity is a key factor for regional stability and would be a model for others in the Middle East.

• (2325)

We know that ISIL is recruiting its fighters from all over the world, including from Canada. We are aware that ISIL's propaganda includes threats to destroy Canada. We cannot treat ISIL as a remote problem that only affects countries in the region. We should continue to be part of the international coalition and do everything in our power to stop ISIL.

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member could comment on the fact that renowned experts in the Middle East have said that the campaign against ISIS in Syria helps the Assad regime and also helps al-Nusra, which is a branch of al Qaeda that is emerging as well and wants to form its own network to support al Qaeda in the region.

Is it any wonder that so many Canadians are worried about where this expansion and move into Syria will lead? Even the minister said that even if we are successful in defeating ISIL in Syria, he does not have a crystal ball to know what the consequence and the result will be. Is it really any wonder that people feel that this is a mistake and that it will lead we do not know where?

**Mr. Bernard Trottier:** Mr. Speaker, the biggest threat to stability in the region is ISIL right now. I know that the member opposite thinks there are potentially other threats. Currently the international coalition of about 60 countries is focused on degrading and ultimately defeating ISIL. That is the biggest threat to stability. It is the biggest threat to pluralism. It is the biggest threat to democracy and human rights. That is the battle we are fighting right now.



*Government Orders*

Kuwait has had some experience with this in the past. The foreign minister of Kuwait talked recently about the effect of the military action in degrading ISIL. He really thinks that it is critical. Without that sustained military effort against ISIL, they cannot move forward in that whole region. It is absolutely essential, and that is the main focus of all of our efforts right now.

We recognize at the same time that while we are having this military campaign, the humanitarian assistance Canada has been providing has been well more than our share. We are the fifth-largest contributor of humanitarian assistance in Iraq and the sixth-largest in Syria. Only large countries like Saudi Arabia and the United States are providing more. Canada is doing everything it can to fight this menace.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if I may, I will quote the leader of the Liberal Party from two days ago, when he stated:

This government is proposing that Canadian Forces participate in a vague combat mission with no clear end point, and we cannot support that.

One thing is clear: Canada has a role to play in the campaign against ISIL. That role must serve our national interests. The one being proposed today by the Prime Minister does not meet that test.

Can the member explain why this motion does not limit the government's action to just Iraq and Syria?

**Mr. Bernard Trottier:** Mr. Speaker, we will take the battle to ISIL. Currently it is established in Iraq and Syria, and that is why we are there. As events change, we will adjust, but right now, it is Iraq and Syria. The objective of this motion is to root out ISIL in Iraq and Syria. I cannot be more clear than that.

I know the member's leader makes adolescent comments about our CF-18s and compares them to body parts. I think we need to have a mature debate about Canada's role in fighting this menace. Canada in the past has stepped up and taken on challenges like this. We are doing our share. It is not a problem Canada created, but it has come to our own shores in terms of terrorist menaces in Canada and in terms of the recruitment of ISIL fighters in Canada going to fight the battle there.

Canada needs to do its share. We need to take the military action, as I mentioned many times, and also the humanitarian efforts we are sustaining there.

• (2330)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to put to my hon. colleague the following quote from our former ambassador to the United Nations, Paul Heinbecker, because he is not someone who rules out that some military action might be needed, and I differ with him on that point. He said recently:

If out of fear of Islamic State and of a desire to stop them, the Coalition were to ally itself, de facto or de jure, with Bashar al-Assad for fleeting tactical advantage, it would be the ultimate betrayal of the Syrian innocents. And of our own values.

Could my hon. colleague respond to that? I think we run a serious risk, in focusing on ISIS, of actually assisting Bashar al-Assad.

**Mr. Bernard Trottier:** Mr. Speaker, all I can say about the Syrian regime is that it is a state sponsor of terror. It is not part of the solution, it is part of the problem. It has created the conditions in Syria that have allowed ISIL to flourish. We are taking on ISIL,

because that is menace right now to the entire region, and we will deal with Assad in due course.

We have to, of course, root out ISIL, and we are going to provide conditions at some point, not Canada specifically but the international community, so that peace and human rights can exist once again in Syria.

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of my constituents from Surrey North to speak on the government's Motion No. 17, which seeks to extend Canada's combat mission in Iraq and further extend it into Syria.

I talked to many of my constituents over the last two weeks and I will summarize some of their concerns today.

The issue that we have at hand is deeply concerning and should not be taken lightly. With the motion before us, the government is basically asking the House of Commons, myself as a member of Parliament, and Canadians as a whole to commit to war. The motion, if passed, will require our brave women and men in uniform to risk their lives overseas. A decision like this needs to be carried out with the utmost responsibility and should not by any means have any political motivations.

There is no doubt that the crimes perpetrated by ISIL are appalling and deeply concerning. We are witnessing heinous acts of oppression, kidnapping, rape, ethnic cleansing and cultural targeting.

There also other conflicts around the world. We have ISIL in Iraq, Boko Haram in Nigeria, the conflict in Ukraine, civil war in Syria, and there are tensions in the Balkans and other parts of the world with violence happening as we speak.

However, what the Conservatives are asking from us today is to risk the lives of our soldiers for a mission that is not defined. It is not part of an international response, and clearly has not been taken into consideration with the seriousness and responsibility that it deserves.

As a representative from Surrey North, as I said, I have talked to many constituents. I cannot, in good conscience, agree to blindly commit the lives of our women and men in uniform to a mission that has no plan and no exit strategy.

How can we support this mission when the Conservatives have misled Canadians about our role in Iraq since day one?

*Government Orders*

It was not too long ago when the Prime Minister insisted that we were only sending troops for a month, and it was only to advise and assist deployment. On September 30, we all saw the headlines when the leader of the opposition, the member for Outremont, stood in this House and asked the Prime Minister specifically whether Canadian troops would be involved in directing air strikes in Iraq. The Prime Minister denied it. However, the mission has quickly escalated to a potential year-long conflict where Canadian troops have been on the front lines exchanging fire with ISIL. Now the Prime Minister is openly considering a massive expansion of the mission into Syria.

The Syrian President Assad has committed heinous crimes against civilians. Now the Prime Minister wants to treat him as a friend. Assad is not an ally. He is a war criminal who uses chemical weapons against his own people and bombs schools and hospitals. We have seen this on television stations. Canada should not be allying itself with Assad or strengthening his hand in any way. This is why none of our western allies, except the United States, are conducting air strikes in Syria.

Paul Heinbecker, Canada's last ambassador to the UN Security Council, was quoted in *The Globe and Mail* on March 23. He said:

If out of fear of Islamic State and of a desire to stop them, the Coalition were to ally itself, de facto or de jure, with Bashar al-Assad for fleeting tactical advantage, it would be the ultimate betrayal of the Syrian innocents. And of our own values.

Simply put, our women and men in uniform have no place being in Iraq and they certainly have no place being in Syria. It is very disturbing to see that the Prime Minister is willing to sleepwalk Canadians into a war without accountability.

• (2335)

The Conservatives have been very dishonest about our role in Iraq since day one, but for the Prime Minister to still deny Canadian troops are involved in combat is simply disrespectful to our forces. The Conservatives continue to mislead us about our soldiers being involved in ground combat, and now they want to put our troops in danger.

They have not gained our trust for us to commit to this mission. They have not gained the trust of Canadians because they have not put out all the facts for Canadians to judge. They have not done that for parliamentarians to be able to look at the facts and decide whether this mission should be approved. The Parliamentary Budget Officer is having trouble getting some facts and figures from the government with regard to how much this war is going to cost.

The recent death of Sergeant Doiron reminds us of the risk of deploying troops to the front lines. History has shown us the dramatic horrors that war can bring. Let us not repeat history. The Prime Minister does not seem to be at all concerned about the risks or lack of clear objectives. He seems to want his war in Iraq just as he wanted George W. Bush's war in 2003. However, history showed us that Canada was right in not participating at that time.

We also need to remember Canada's involvement in the war in Afghanistan. Just like our current mission in Iraq, the war in Afghanistan started with Canadian Forces participating in a very limited operations. We know what happened in Iraq and in Afghanistan. It was the longest mission, which was 10 years. New Democrats stood in the House and opposed both of those wars.

Today, after 10 years, we can see why the NDP made the right decision, because NDP members make their decisions based on principles. We do not base them on fear or political motivations. We stand up for what is right.

There is a lot we can learn from our military intervention in Afghanistan. Only a few days ago, March 5, the Minister of Foreign Affairs actually said in the media, "Being in this for the long term—it's similar to what we did in Afghanistan, for instance". That is what the foreign affairs minister said. I would like to point out for the minister that the deployment in Afghanistan is nothing Canadians want to see repeated. It was the longest mission, 10 years, cost billions of dollars, and resulted in 166 soldiers, brave men and women, being killed, more than 1,000 injured, and thousands of others who suffered and are still suffering today from post-traumatic stress disorder.

We ask our soldiers to go overseas. We ask them to fight for our country, to defend our freedoms, to ensure our right to practise religion, to freely speak in the House, and yet when those soldiers come home, we have seen the record of the government over the last number of years on the treatment they have given our soldiers. That is shameful. It is time we invested in various services that our soldiers require when they serve for this country.

The Conservatives do not like to look after our veterans, but when it comes to war, they seem to be more than willing to blindly spend money to ensure that we go into some sort of war with no plan and no exit strategy. We must learn from history so that we do not repeat it. Another example is the Libya situation, and we know what happened there. There is a lawless society there. There is no rule of law. We continue to see the same pattern of the Conservatives following in the footsteps of the United States and sleepwalking into military interventions.

• (2340)

I want to quote Mrs. Jaisri Margaret Lambert. She is a constituent of mine, and she sent me an email that came to my office.

Canadians are peacemakers, not warmongers. This is a critical time to disallow the government to even seek the right to kill and find a way of making it "legal". Canada is historically wisely governed by a foreign policy of peacekeeping. Let not my taxes be used to bomb. Help! Life and death issue most important. Please make my voice heard in the House of Commons!"

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that speech was regrettable for a couple of reasons, one of which is that about 80% was verbatim the template speech of New Democratic MPs. I have been here for 11 hours. I think I have heard that speech four times verbatim.

Point two, I think it is really unfortunate for the member to characterize those who believe we must use military force to stop the growth of a genocidal terrorist organization as being "warmongers" who want to kill people.

*Government Orders*

In point of fact, what the government and 24 other countries want, including the many social democratic governments of Europe, such as those of France and Denmark, which have similar policies and similar military activity, is to save lives, to save ethnic minorities, and to save women and girls from the brutality of this organization.

The hon. member quoted one constituent. That is fine. However, I would point out to the member that I have been several times to the Chaldean parish in his constituency in Surrey North, which is the home of about 1,000 Chaldean-Canadians, almost all of them refugees. The size of the parish has tripled in the past several years because of this government's Iraqi refugee resettlement program.

I have spent a lot of time with the Chaldeans in his riding. I wonder if he has. If he has, would he not admit that every member of that community wants Canada to engage in a military action against ISIL? They want their relatives to be able to go back to their homes in the Nineveh plains. They understand that region. They understand Iraq, and they know that only through an appropriate use of force will ISIL be stopped.

Has he talked to them, and why does he disregard the voices of the Chaldean-Iraqi refugees in his own constituency?

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu:** I want to thank the hard-working Minister of National Defence for his question. He has actually been working way too hard over the last number of years.

While the Minister of National Defence was asking a question, I had a chance to tweet and find out what has been happening. I googled his name, and voilà, what comes up? This is what the Minister of National Defence said the other day. He was pressed by one of the journalists at CBC, who asked him whether he has an exit strategy, whether he has a plan to get out of Syria, and whether the land that will be cleared of ISIL will be reclaimed by President Assad. This is what the minister said:

I don't have a crystal ball to tell you exactly how this is going to end but I can tell you that Canada has a responsibility to play a role with 20 other like-minded countries in degrading this organization.

Sometimes it is degrading. Other times it is that we are going to finish them off. Is the minister's exist strategy to tweet his way out of Syria?

• (2345)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I wanted to comment on the criticism of the member for Surrey North by my friend, the Minister of National Defence. I have also been here for many hours today.

First, compliments to the Minister of National Defence. He is the only minister who consistently attends debates on any item under his portfolio, including when he was Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and now as Minister of National Defence.

However, having sat here, I have also heard a lot of canned speeches that have emanated from the PMO. I do not find the member for Surrey North to have repeated anything verbatim.

However, I would ask the member for Surrey North if he would also offer in a brief comment what it is we can do instead, because I do not believe any of us want to stand on the sidelines and allow ISIS to get any stronger.

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu:** Mr. Speaker, absolutely there is a role that Canada can play. As one of my constituents said to me today, we have traditionally played a role of peacemakers and of humanitarian aid. We can play that role. We can help the very refugees who need our help in Syria. That is a role Canada has traditionally played, and that is how we brought the world together. We were able to resolve and lead in that field.

Unfortunately the Conservatives are meeting their 2013 targets for Syrian refugees in 2015, which is two years late.

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the theme from the Conservatives has been that they care about keeping Canadians safe.

After a decade now of Conservative governments, where we have seen their complete incompetence and irresponsibility around 1,200 missing and murdered indigenous women, where we have seen Canadians who have died because of their cutbacks in food safety and the appalling incident that we saw in Lac-Mégantic where we lacked rail safety that led to the death of dozens of Canadians, we take no lessons from Conservatives on keeping Canadians safe. They have an appallingly poor record on that, and that is something on which I think Canadians will judge them on October 19.

The second point I want to make is that I am profoundly disappointed in the fact that the Liberals have not shown up to the debate this evening. They had three speaking spots and time after time this evening they simply refused to stand and defend their position. I have been following the position of the Liberals over the last six months. They reversed themselves three times over that time. First they were in favour of the mission, then they were opposed, then they were in favour, then they were opposed. It would have been nice to have Liberals actually stand to explain and defend their position.

My family history is very similar to so many other Canadian families across the country. When people go to New Westminster, they will see a cenotaph in front of city hall. Two members of my family have their names inscribed on that cenotaph, having given their lives for their country. There is no doubt that many Canadian families have the same story. Many Canadian families have shown great courage. The reality is that our men and women in uniform show great courage all the time.

It is important, though, as the Leader of the Opposition stressed earlier this week, that when we send our men and women in service overseas, we are honest and forthright with them. The government has been anything but.

I will start with the history of the Minister of National Defence. I am happy he is here this evening, but he cannot deny that his record has been less than forthright when we look at it in cabinet.

Back in 2011, he manufactured a fake citizenship ceremony. It was bizarre and unprecedented. He has never apologized for what was an essential fib that was put forward.

*Government Orders*

Since he has become Minister of National Defence, we have seen a number of these fibs, misleading statements, statements that are completely manufactured. First, there was the photo of a woman taken at a religious ceremony, that the minister purported to be of a woman being abused. More recently, there was an incident that was manufactured where a Russian jet supposedly buzzed a Canadian warship. NATO had to openly contradict the minister and say that incident simply did not happen.

These are not isolated incidents, because it comes into the narrative that we have seen from the Prime Minister.

On September 24, the Prime Minister and the government said that Canada was considering a request from the United States to provide assistance in the fight against ISIL. On September 25, as many of my colleagues have outlined over the course of the day, it was actually revealed that the Canadian government was going to the U.S. government asking to provide options for Canadian support. On September 30, we were told that our forces were not going into a combat mission, not going to the front lines, but the casualties that we have seen so far belie that fib. The tragic death of Sergeant Andrew Doiron as well shows very clearly that the statement by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons was simply not true.

The most egregious comments coming from the Conservatives, and we have heard them tonight repeatedly, was the point that somehow this was a balanced approach, that somehow there was just as much emphasis being put on humanitarian aid as there was on the bombing mission. We have already seen from the Parliamentary Budget Officer that the government has deliberately hidden information from the Parliamentary Budget Officer and actually broken the law, and that the actual size, scope and extent of the bombing mission is perhaps as high now as \$1 billion.

● (2350)

We cannot get accurate figures on that because the government has been hiding information, contrary to the law, from the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

The reality is the government seems to be willing to spend unlimited amounts of money, even hiding it from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, for the bombing mission, bombing people and targets in Iraq, and now looking to bomb targets in Syria.

However, to say that somehow the government is emphasizing, equally, a humanitarian mission is simply ridiculous. The government itself has tried to spin its figures. Tonight we heard from the Minister of Labour that the Conservative government has fed millions of the 2.5 million refugees who are living in appallingly dire circumstances right now in areas of northern Iraq and southern Iraq.

Let us look at the figures the Conservatives themselves have released, and this is a figure that we have started to raise today, and not one Conservative has been able to answer the question. When we do the math, it amounts to five cents a day per refugee.

We are being asked to believe, if we listen to the Minister of Labour, that somehow at five cents a day per refugee we are feeding, clothing, putting tents up, creating hospitals and educating millions of refugees. That is a whopper that defies any attempt at realistic and constructive debate. It is simply a whopper that, compared to inventing incidents with Russian jets, inventing fake citizenship

ceremonies, having the Prime Minister invent that somehow the United States was asking Canada to come in, pales in comparison.

It is a myth that somehow the Conservatives are providing humanitarian aid in such a way that we are helping the millions of people who are living in appallingly dire circumstances.

As members well know, we have had the Kurdish government and the Iraqi government hamstrung by the extent of the humanitarian crisis. Canada is simply not there in any meaningful way at five cents a day per refugee. That is what the government's own figures tell us about the extent of the humanitarian aid. It is five cents a day. A few grains of rice, maybe a tablespoon of powdered milk.

However, to say that there are tents and somehow there are schools being constructed, somehow there are hospitals and medical facilities being constructed, somehow sanitation is being taken care of, somehow water programs that are desperately needed are being taken care of, it is simply not true. It is the biggest whopper of all the whoppers the Conservatives have brought forward tonight.

It is simply the reason we are seeing that steady erosion in support for this mission since the beginning. It is because the Conservatives have simply not been honest and forthright with the Canadian population. That is why we have seen, over the course of the last few weeks, a steady decline in support for this mission.

It is because Canadians have fundamental values. They understand that ISIS is terrible and has created a terrible humanitarian crisis. Canadians can also see that what we should be doing is offering that immediate humanitarian support, not at five cents per refugee per day, enough for a few grains of rice or a tablespoon of powdered milk.

Canada really should be stepping up to a humanitarian mission. We really should be looking at this, instead of pretending that somehow we are building schools and hospitals. We really should be putting and investing so that we can help stem that extent of the humanitarian crisis. That is the appropriate role for Canada.

The government has said yes to \$1 billion for bombing, that it is willing to do that, it will even hide funds from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, it will not be straightforward, and it will not be transparent.

The reality is there are millions of people suffering tonight. They need support tonight. What Canada should be doing, and if Conservatives support the amendment that was brought forward by the member for Ottawa Centre, what Parliament would be directing our military forces to be doing and the government to be doing is providing humanitarian support now for the 2.5 million refugees who are living in such dire circumstances.

We should be looking at providing schools and medical support. We should be looking at sanitation. We should be looking at providing food and water, and not at five cents per refugee per day, which is what the Conservatives have ultimately admitted is what they are actually providing in humanitarian support.

That is why we are urging Conservative members to support the NDP amendment and put in place real humanitarian relief.

• (2355)

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I regret to say that the member's entire speech was based on complete rubbish. He is confusing two completely different facts.

Yes, there are some 2 million Syrian refugees to whose humanitarian relief we have contributed more than \$700 million as the sixth-largest donor nation. He is confusing that population of 2 million with the \$67.1 million that we have contributed to the some 200,000 internally displaced Iraqis since last August, which actually works out to about \$335 per refugee. He is wrong by a factor of 20. We are the fifth-largest contributor to humanitarian relief of the 200,000 IDPs in Iraq. That is not 5¢ a day. It is 20 times that.

We are the fifth-largest contributor, and we are by far the largest per capita contributor of any developed industrialized country. We should be proud of our enormous, disproportionate contribution.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the Minister of National Defence, has all of his exaggerations and all of his whoppers he has been telling, like Russian jets buzzing Canadian war ships. It was not true, NATO simply said. The Minister of National Defence simply was making it up. There was the fake citizenship ceremony, and now he has fake figures. The reality is that the figures that the Conservatives have put forward are exactly that, 5¢ per refugee per day in one of the greatest humanitarian crises that the world has seen in recent times. The Conservatives should be ashamed of themselves.

**The Speaker:** It being 12 midnight, pursuant to the order made on Wednesday, March 25, the debate is now adjourned.

---

## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

• (2400)

[*English*]

### RAIL TRANSPORTATION

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Tuesday of next week has everything it takes to be a black day in northern Ontario if the government continues to drag its feet on a proposal to save passenger services on the Algoma Central Railway. Despite a mountain of work that has been done by a working group trying to pull these trains from the ashes of the fire that was set by the government when it made a questionable change in the designation of what rural and remote passenger routes are, if no signal of intent is received before Tuesday, the last passenger cars for the ACR will pull into the terminal.

It will put a knife into a localized economy that averages \$250 million in business a year, and it will threaten hundreds of jobs and businesses. It will even isolate the community of Oba, whose only option to get out will be a private road, which is not maintained for its use at all.

Despite no end of lead time and the diligent efforts of the working group to find a third party deemed acceptable by CN, the

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government will not even offer a signal of intent on the proposal to wean the service off the subsidy in only five years. All we are told is that Transport Canada is working on the file and that everybody has to wait.

That is not necessarily the case, though. There are workarounds that are not even being explored, and the lack of creativity from the government on this is disheartening for people waiting to see if they will be able to transport guests to their businesses, get to their camp, or even make their way from their small town to a larger one for something as simple as a doctor's appointment.

The first and most obvious solution that is not being explored is reclassifying the line as remote and recognizing the plight that residents of Oba will face if forced to rely on a sporadically maintained private road to travel from that community. It was clear from the get-go that Oba was being stranded by the reclassification of the ACR passenger line, but the government refused to budge. If the line were again considered remote, it would be eligible for the same subsidy that kept trains rolling for years, and CN could be asked to bridge the gap that is created while Railmark's paperwork is sorted out. For the purposes of safety clearance, which I understand is one of the items holding up Railmark's ability to take the line over on April 1, CN already has the green light.

The second solution would not require reclassification of the line, but only an answer to the proposal in the affirmative. This, again, would allow CN to consider bridging the gap, which it well may view as doable with the knowledge that it would not be an act of charity.

I have outlined just a couple of the scenarios that could be used to save passenger services on the ACR. I am sure the government will be able to find even more options if it chooses to. In any scenario that will keep the trains running, there is bound to be some back and forth, but that it is what is missing and that is why I am raising this tonight. There just has not been much in the way of dialogue, and the reason for this is the unfathomable lack of interest shown by the government in the process.

Time is of the essence. Will the government signal its intent on the proposal that has been made to protect this important piece of northern Ontario infrastructure? The people who rely on the trains deserve an immediate answer.

**Mr. Bernard Trottier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for La Francophonie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, at the outset, I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the member for Sault Ste. Marie on this file for his constituents.

It is often said that Canada is a country that is tied together by its railways. We have one of the largest rail networks in the world. With some 48,000 kilometres of track, it could circle the globe.

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For over a century, Algoma Central Railway has played a part in the network, providing passenger train service to numerous people in this area. The ACR passenger rail service runs almost 500 kilometres between Sault Ste. Marie and Hearst. In particular, it has served the canoeists, snowmobilers, cottagers and tourists who wish to travel to the beautiful wilderness recreation sports that this region offers.

As the member is aware, budget 2013 renewed funding for the Algoma Central Railway for a period of one year, until March 31, 2014. As the Minister of Transport announced last year, our government was pleased to extend funding for another year, to March 31, 2015, to continue operation of the the Algoma Central Railway. This funding gave local stakeholders time to explore sustainable, long-term solutions for passenger rail service in the area.

Over the past year, the Algoma Central Railway passenger service working group has been examining the feasibility of continuing the service and has identified a potential new operator. Recently Transport Canada received a proposal to provide temporary funding support. The Minister of Transport has asked departmental officials to examine the proposal and the process is under way. The proposed new operator will also require a railway operating certificate. That request was submitted to officials last week and officials need adequate time to conduct their review. This work by officials is essential to ensure that the proposed passenger rail operation is safe for all Canadians before beginning operations, and that any funding provided is an effective use of taxpayer dollars.

The Government of Canada has no role in operating the Algoma Central Railway. The current operator, CN, is a private company that makes its own decisions concerning its operations, and which services and routes are offered to its customers. Similarly, the potential new operator must also make a thoughtful decision regarding whether or not to proceed. Any decision to terminate the Algoma Central Railway between Sault Ste. Marie and Hearst will be a business decision made by the owner or operator of the Algoma Central Railway.

Lastly, I would like to remind all members that this government has supported and will continue to support the transportation needs of northern Ontario. In the transportation sector alone, we have committed more than \$150 million to improve northern Ontario's highways, rail infrastructure and border crossings since 2006.

• (2405)

**Mrs. Carol Hughes:** Mr. Speaker, it is the current government that has been dragging its feet.

[*Translation*]

If the government wanted to support this initiative, I suppose it would want to add some conditions. However, this late in the game, such conditions would be considered inappropriate in negotiations in good faith and would most likely seem harsh.

Given its reluctance to communicate with the parties involved, any chance of an exchange of views is growing slimmer given the limited amount of time left to save passenger service on the Algoma Central Railway.

If the train stops running, businesses will close, jobs will be lost, and the local economy will disappear. The government will have to live with those consequences for a long time.

Northern Ontarians are patient, but they have good memories, and they deserve better.

Will the government make this issue a priority and do something to save passenger service on the Algoma Central Railway?

[*English*]

**Mr. Bernard Trottier:** Mr. Speaker, recognizing the increasing number of transportation options available to citizens of Sault Ste. Marie, Hearst, Hawk Junction and Oba, including highways and other rail lines, in budget 2013, the Government of Canada made the decision to terminate the subsidy to Algoma Central Railway on March 31, 2014. Last year the Minister of Transport extended the \$2.2 million subsidy for an additional year to allow time for stakeholders interested in continuing the service to come up with a long-term, self-sustaining solution.

Transport Canada officials are reviewing a proposal submitted by Sault Ste. Marie for a possible new operator to provide passenger rail service between Sault Ste. Marie and Hearst, Ontario. Currently, the department is also reviewing the application from the potential new operator to obtain a railway operating certificate, ROC. It is extremely important that Transport Canada has an opportunity to assess whether or not the proposed passenger rail operation is safe for all Canadians before it begins operations, and that any funding provided by this government is an effective use of taxpayer dollars.

**The Speaker:** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until later this day, at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12:09 a.m.)







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