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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, February 24, 2016

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, February 24, 2016

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[English]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga.

[Members sang the national anthem]

recruitment is a tool adopted by the British government that removes names from resumé, prevents unconscious bias, and ensures that everyone can develop and succeed based on their potential, talent, and determination.

I urge the House to look into embracing name-blind recruitment right here in Canada. We must ensure our public service adopts name-blind recruitment. This important step would build a public service that is even more talented, diverse, and effective. It is crucial that Canadians who have the grades, the skills, and the determination succeed.

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STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

AIR CANADA

Mr. Simon Marcil (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in order to privatize Air Canada, the Mulroney government made a solemn promise to the people of Quebec and enshrined guarantees for maintenance activities in the law.

Since the Conservatives and the Liberals decided not to enforce the law, Air Canada has had free rein to break it. Thanks to the aerospace industry, Quebec is a more technologically advanced society than Canada, but I am very concerned about the federal government's complacency.

Maintaining aircraft means more than just changing the oil. Planes are often dismantled and rebuilt from the ground up with new parts. The entire industry and its suppliers are suffering. By failing to enforce its own law, Canada has betrayed the employees, and we all know it. It also broke a solemn promise to the people of Quebec. We know whose side we are on: we support the Aveos workers.

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[English]

NAME-BLIND RECRUITMENT

Mr. Ahmed Hussen (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to an idea that will assist in our fight to end discrimination and attain real equality in our country.

According to research in the U.S., U.K., and Canada, people with English-sounding names are nearly twice as likely to get job callbacks than people with ethnic-sounding names. Name-blind

[Translation]

350TH ANNIVERSARY OF CHARLESBOURG

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to take the opportunity I have here today to recognize the hard work of everyone who contributed to the success of the 350th anniversary of Charlesbourg.

Located in the heart of my riding, Charlesbourg is now one of Quebec City's six boroughs. Although the amalgamation dates back to January 1, 2002, the people of Charlesbourg have always felt a strong sense of belonging within their community. Twelve months of celebrations were planned for 2015. All the festivities were very successful thanks to the historical activities, community feasts, and large-scale events that were organized.

I would first like to recognize the contribution of the 350th anniversary organizing committee. Under the guidance of its chair, René Cloutier, that team put together an exceptional program. I also want to thank the many volunteers who helped out, as well as the people of Charlesbourg who proudly celebrated their roots. This is proof that no matter what it is called, a municipality's roots will always be reflected in its people.

Statements by Members

[English]

LONGEST NIGHT

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on February 19, I slept in a car. Brampton's mayor, local city partners, and many others took part in the United Way's Longest Night. It was cold. It was uncomfortable, and my neck was sore, but this was only one night. Sadly, too many Canadians do this night after night, some for years at a time. This experience gave me a small glimpse into the challenges of homelessness in Canada. I am glad we could bring a bit of awareness to this vital issue in many of our communities.

I hope to work more with all my colleagues in the House to get people into affordable shelter. How we treat our most in need is a reflection of ourselves. If we work together, we can solve this issue for the people of Brampton South and all Canadians.

* * *

PINK SHIRT DAY

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, New Democrats from across the country will proudly wear pink in solidarity with victims of bullying in Canada.

The pink shirt movement was established in 2007 by two Nova Scotia teens who bought pink t-shirts to show their support for a boy who was bullied for simply wearing a pink t-shirt. Like them, we want anyone who feels lonely or desperate because they are a victim of bullying to know we support them.

OUTSaskatoon is an organization in my riding on the front lines of helping those impacted by bullying. Its vision to live in a community that values and supports people of all gender identities, expression, and sexualities provides us a way forward.

New Democrats believe the federal government has a leadership role to play in eliminating all forms of bullying. That is why we are calling on the government to take immediate steps to adopt a national anti-bullying strategy.

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●(1410)

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we continue to celebrate Black History Month, I wish to draw attention to two Canadian civil rights icons from my riding who helped promote equality across this great country.

The first of these two civil rights champions is Ms. Viola Desmond, who was arrested in 1946 in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, for sitting in and refusing to leave the whites-only section of the Roseland Theatre. Ms. Desmond was jailed, but challenged the criminal charges against her and won. Her courage and conviction paved the way for the province to strike down its segregation laws and her story is now featured in the newest Canada *Heritage Minute*.

I also wish to pay homage to the members of the No. 2 Construction Battalion, Canada's only predominantly black battalion, which formed 100 years ago in Pictou, Nova Scotia. This battalion has recently been honoured by the issuance of a commemorative stamp by Canada Post that recognizes the role it

played in breaking down racial barriers in the Canadian military, so black citizens could freely enlist in service of our country.

I commend these initiatives that recognize the importance of these heroes and their contributions for a fairer, more equal, and better Canada.

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NUCLEAR ENERGY

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to thank the men and women who work in Canada's nuclear energy industry, and to welcome the scientists, researchers, workers, and companies here to Ottawa for their annual meetings.

Many Canadians do not know that \$7 billion in economic activity comes from this industry, and there are over 70,000 jobs from coast to coast.

In my riding of Durham, the Darlington generating station produces clean, reliable, and affordable electricity. Combined with the Pickering and the Bruce, it gives Ontario over half of its electricity, greenhouse gas emission-free.

While the new government talks about greenhouse gas reductions a lot, it never mentions the nuclear energy industry and its contribution. Canada was the second country to have controlled nuclear fission. We have high tech and important jobs. It is time for the government to stand up and all Canadians to recognize the role nuclear energy plays in Canada.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recently celebrated Family Day in Ontario. I rise to welcome two new families from Syria to our Canadian family, and to my riding of Scarborough Centre.

The Al Jawabrah family are sponsored by the Jame Abu Bakr Siddique mosque, and I was pleased to meet Luai, Heba, and their children at the North American Muslim Foundation's Family Day event. They are settling in well, and their children Jodi, Talen, and Jawad really enjoyed the bouncy castle.

Also new to Scarborough is the Samodi family, who took to the ice for the first time at my Family Day skating party. They are sponsored by the Rosedale United Church, and their daughter Salam is looking forward to polishing her English skills through the Toronto District School Board's LEAP program.

I ask the House to join me in welcoming the Al Jawabrah and Samodi families to Canada. Welcome home.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

WORLD POND HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr. T.J. Harvey (Tobique—Mactaquac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say a few words about hockey. I am very proud to have the opportunity to acknowledge the community of Plaster Rock, where more than 200 organizers and volunteers are getting ready for the World Pond Hockey Championships being held this weekend.

If hockey is our most popular national game, then nobody does a better job of making us feel like Canadians than the people of Plaster Rock.

This top-notch, annual, four-day event started as a community fundraiser and now draws more than 8,000 spectators and 120 teams from around the world for a bit of fun on Roulston Lake.

●(1415)

[English]

With gentlemen rules, mounds of snow to shape the rinks, live bands, fireworks, frigid temperatures, tailgate parties, barrel fires, and double-wide Zambonis; the World Pond Hockey Championship takes hometown hockey to a whole new level.

The World Pond Hockey Championship—

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. member for Carleton.

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TAXATION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if someone launches a start-up in Canada, their competitors may be south of the border, where they get paid in U.S. dollars, have more access to risk capital, and pay lower marginal income tax rates. How can someone compensate and sign up the best and brightest here at home when there is little money to spare? The answer is often stock options, where workers accept lower pay in exchange for a piece of future gains. Doubling taxes on stock options may smother businesses right out of existence, when in fact we should do the opposite.

The goal of social justice should not be to turn workers against business owners but to turn workers into business owners, as Thatcher put it, to free all people, to lift themselves up through work, risk, and smarts. That is the Canadian way.

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SHOOTING AT LA LOCHE

Mr. Don Rusnak (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I stand in support of the people of La Loche, Saskatchewan. In the past month, this community has shown unity and bravery in the face of great tragedy. The heartbreak and loss accompanied by such hardship is not one that can easily be forgotten. However, the community has demonstrated great resilience as they move forward together.

Today, I ask Canadians to keep the people of La Loche in their thoughts as educators and students return to school. Healing takes time. Let us stand together to show that the entire country supports

the La Loche residents as they continue on this healing journey. Thank you, *meegwetch*.

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[Translation]

MARGUERITE CHARLEBOIS

Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here in Parliament we are one big family.

However, in addition to the elected members of this place and the members of the other place, there are also the people who work hard to ensure that we enjoy our time in Ottawa.

I have the immense pleasure of recognizing the work, dedication and congeniality of Marguerite Charlebois, who is celebrating 35 years of service in the parliamentary restaurant, where she is the hostess.

[English]

Marguerite has always taken care of all members of Parliament. She first served while our Prime Minister was running and playing around these walls.

[Translation]

Marguerite is a remarkable example of dedication, always has a smile on her face and, above all, always makes us feel at home.

We would like to say thank you and congratulations, Marguerite.

The Speaker: It seems to me that the hon. member did not note the presence of someone in the gallery. Had he wished to do so, I believe he would have had the unanimous consent of the House.

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[English]

OIL RESPECT CAMPAIGN

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on February 18, in Calgary, the Oil Respect campaign began with the goal of telling the story of the hard-working members of Canada's critically important energy sector. They are our neighbours and our fellow Canadians.

The Oil Respect campaign has started at the right time. With extremely low oil prices, it is important to remind all Canadians that our energy sector is a key part of the Canadian economy. We are lucky to have one of the strongest, most respected regulatory systems in the world. We also have one of the best trained workforces in the energy sector. We need to encourage and support the families who struggle through these tough times.

I encourage all parliamentarians to please support the Oil Respect campaign, which will be coming to a community near them. In this party, we continue to stand up for our energy sector, and for Canadian workers.

*Oral Questions***THE MEMBER FOR VANCOUVER GRANVILLE**

Ms. Filomena Tassi (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on January 25, 2016, the hon. member for Vancouver Granville was named one of “8 Women Leaders to Watch” by the Nobel Women's Initiative. This venerable group of Nobel prize-winning women praised the hon. member of the Kwakwaka'wakw people for being the first indigenous woman in Canada to become Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.

As a former provincial Crown prosecutor, B.C. treaty commissioner and regional chief of the BC Assembly of First Nations, the hon. member is truly a woman of great accomplishment.

These achievements were not born of ambition; they were cast in the fire of a profound love of country and a desire to serve and improve the lives of her fellow citizens. Her achievements were made real through the hon. member's hard work, dedication, compassion and strong values. She is an example to all women who seek to make a difference.

I ask the House to join me in congratulating the hon. member for Vancouver Granville for her recent recognition, her leadership, and her heart.

* * *

• (1420)

WOMEN'S MEMORIAL MARCH

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, February 14 was the 26th annual Women's Memorial March for missing and murdered women. Just like in the last 25 years, I marched with family members, elders, women, aboriginal leaders, and activists as a public expression of our sorrow and to demand justice. Hundreds joined the march, and the NDP leader was among them.

We march because far too many aboriginal women face physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual violence. They suffer from the legacy of colonization. They live in poverty. Access to safe, secure, affordable housing is just a dream.

A national inquiry done right can be the catalyst for historical change and healing. We need to hear the haunting cries of family members and value the knowledge of women and aboriginal organizations that work with indigenous women and girls.

The Missing and Murdered Women's Coalition has made a thoughtful submission regarding the design of the national inquiry to the minister. I ask the government to honour these recommendations.

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PINK SHIRT DAY

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud and honoured to rise in the House to support Pink Shirt Day, a national anti-bullying campaign to help youth in need.

Bullying can take many forms, including name calling, pushing and, more common, cyberbullying.

It is so important that victims of bullying know they are not alone and that there is help and support available. That is why wearing a pink shirt sends a strong message that we all care.

It may seem simple, but the act of wearing a pink shirt can start conversations, and conversations can be a big step toward healing and helping.

As the official opposition critic for Families, Children and Social Development, I urge everyone to post on their social media feeds #PinkShirtPromise, support Pink Shirt Day, help end bullying, and vow to help spread kindness.

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[Translation]

NATIONAL PINK SHIRT DAY

Mr. Pat Finnigan (Miramichi—Grand Lake, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, Canadians across the country are wearing pink in support of National Pink Shirt Day, an anti-bullying initiative.

We know that words are powerful. However, they can be devastating when they are used to torment, belittle, or demean someone, and the consequences can leave scars that last a lifetime. Research has clearly shown that bullying can lead to anxiety, depression, physical illness, and even suicide.

[English]

This is simply unacceptable. Bullying should not be part of growing up for anyone, and school should be a place to learn, not a place to fear.

The time to say no to bullying and cyberbullying is now. Let us use our voices for those who may be too afraid to use theirs. We are stronger because of our differences, not in spite of them. Everyone deserves the chance to show the world who they really are.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

FINANCE

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first the Prime Minister promised that he would only borrow \$10 billion. Then he broke that promise and said that it would have to be more than \$10 billion. Now he is saying that he is going to have to borrow \$18 billion, but that is not counting the first \$10 billion. Therefore, maybe it is \$28 billion, but definitely not \$30 billion.

The Liberals have thrown around so many numbers over there that nobody knows what is going on with them. Could the Prime Minister just admit that he and the Minister of Finance are just making it up as they go along?

*Oral Questions***FINANCE**

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for 10 years, Canadians struggled with lower growth and the kind of government that did not create the opportunities that Canadians knew we needed to build a stronger future for ourselves, for our families, for our communities, and for our children.

That is why the Liberals campaigned on a promise and a commitment to invest in our communities once again, to offer Canadians in the middle class and those working hard to join it the opportunity to succeed and to create, once again, the kind of economy that everyone could be proud to participate in.

That is what we are committed to doing. That is what Canadians elected us to do. That is exactly what we are going to do.

• (1425)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign, the Liberals promised Canadians that they would not borrow more than \$10 billion. We have now learned that they plan to borrow \$30 billion. What will that number be tomorrow? We do not know.

Why is the Prime Minister borrowing money that we do not have when we are not in a recession and when he has no plan as to how he will pay it back?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I always find it interesting to hear my Conservative colleagues continue to repeat the same arguments that Canadians rejected during the last election. We know that we need to invest in the Canadian economy. We know that the middle class needs help and that we need to make it easier to create good jobs. That is what we promised to do and that is exactly what we are going to do in the coming years.

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[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister could not point to a single solitary country that actually asked us to pull our CF-18s out of the fight against ISIS, an American general in charge of the air strike said that he was sad to see our pilots come home. He also said that he hoped the Canadians would come back.

Why did the Prime Minister mislead Canadians so badly when he suggested that our American allies were just fine with us pulling out our CF-18s?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our allies are pleased to know that Canada continues to be a strong member of the coalition and indeed has stepped up our involvement in the combat to fight against ISIS. The way we are doing it is by doing what Canada has done a very good job of. We are doing more training. We are helping on intelligence. We are doing more humanitarian and refugee support.

Indeed, as Brett McGurk, the U.S. special presidential envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, said, “Welcome significant enhancements key partner Canada will bring to coming phases of our campaign to defeat ISIL.” That is exactly what we are doing.

Hon. Jason Kenney (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, only the Prime Minister thinks that we are stepping up our fight by ending our combat mission. It makes no sense.

Neither did it make sense when the Prime Minister said that budgets balanced themselves. Now, we have broken through a \$10 billion deficit commitment. Now we are hot on a trail of a \$30 billion deficit, a completely wrecked campaign commitment.

Does the Prime Minister not understand that deficits now mean higher taxes in the future? Does he still believe that budgets balance themselves?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the member opposite seems to continue to fail to understand is that Canadians know that we need to invest in our economy, that we need to invest in the kind of infrastructure that our communities have been asking for, and that we need to invest in the kind of jobs and support for the middle class that Canadians across the country demanded in the last election.

That member and his party failed to offer Canadians the kind of vision for the future they needed, and that is why they are sitting on the other side of the House today.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jason Kenney (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the problem is that the Prime Minister made a very clear commitment that the deficit would not go over \$10 billion. This week, the Liberals admitted that the deficit might hit \$30 billion. The figure tripled in three months.

My question for the Prime Minister is simple. How will the Liberals reduce this significant deficit that is growing day by day without increasing taxes? Which taxes will they increase?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, it is clear that the Conservatives do not understand how to grow the Canadian economy. We need to invest to create growth.

After 10 years of cuts, service rollbacks, and tax cuts for the wealthy instead of for those who need them most, Canada's economy is no longer operating at full capacity. That is why we are making the investments that Canadians demanded during the election campaign.

* * *

[*English*]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, another first nations community in northern Ontario has just declared a state of emergency, not because of a weather disaster or because of any accident but because of the everyday reality there that is simply unacceptable in our country.

Oral Questions

One woman died, as her husband held her hand, and the community's nursing station ran out of the oxygen that could have saved her life. Two four-year-olds died of fever because of strep throat and an epidemic of suicides has hit children as young as 10 years old. The regional chief talks of discrimination and institutional racism in the health care system. He is right.

What is the government doing about it?

● (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for bringing forward this tragedy that we all know far too well goes on not just in northern Ontario but across the country.

We need to fix a relationship that has broken over the past decades and, indeed, centuries between Canada and indigenous peoples. That is why this government has pledged to renew a new relationship, putting real money forward to build support on infrastructure, health, on a broad range of things, and creating a true nation-to-nation relationship.

This is something I know all members in the House can agree on. We need to begin to be true partners with first nations.

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[Translation]

AIR CANADA

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for the past two days, the Prime Minister and his Minister of Transport have been saying that Air Canada, and I quote, “committed to establishing a CSeries maintenance centre here”.

That is not true. There is no firm commitment to build a centre. All we have is Air Canada's vague intention to subcontract maintenance. The Prime Minister is obviously misinformed.

Can he tell us why he released Air Canada from what were very clear obligations under the law, thereby renegeing on his promise to help the 2,600 Aveos workers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we are helping manufacturing workers across the country, and especially in the aerospace industry, by investing in high-end manufacturing. We are also looking at how we can help Bombardier.

We want to emphasize the great news that Air Canada is going to buy CSeries planes and that Bombardier, Quebec, and Air Canada are going to work together to keep the CSeries subcontract here for 20 years, not just for Air Canada planes, but for Bombardier planes around the world. That is good news for our industry and our workers.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, so now the Prime Minister is admitting that there has been no firm commitment to build a maintenance centre.

Instead of enforcing the law, as the government has a duty to do, since that is the very foundation of a democratic society where the law applies equally to everyone, the Liberals are going to amend the legislation governing Air Canada to protect the airline from future litigation.

Who is in calling the shots here? Is it Air Canada or the Prime Minister? Will the Prime Minister promise not to touch the act governing Air Canada and will he finally stand up for the 2,600 Aveos workers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very concerned about the job losses at Bombardier and the workers who have been out of work for several years now.

We intend to work hard to rebuild the aerospace industry across Canada, and not just in Quebec. That is exactly what we are doing as we work with the industry, with Bombardier and Air Canada, with Quebec and the other provinces in order to ensure a strong future for the Canadian economy and our exceptional workers.

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[English]

TAXATION

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as Kevin Page so eloquently put it, “This fudge factor is overwhelming”.

The Liberals promised to close the stock option tax loophole. Their platform notes that about 8,000 high-income Canadians take home more than \$0.5 billion each year from this one loophole alone.

However, now it seems the Liberals are secretly telling businesses that they are going to break that promise as well.

Can the Prime Minister finally give a straight answer? Will the upcoming budget close the stock option tax loophole for wealthy CEOs, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has been around this House long enough to know that all will be answered on March 22 when we put forward our budget.

It will be focused on creating growth for the middle class; creating prosperity in Canada, where we have struggled in the past; and ensuring that the middle class and those working hard to join the middle class will have the kinds of opportunities and future for themselves and their children that we know Canadians deserve.

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THE ECONOMY

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that the Liberal Minister of Finance has no money.

That is because he has already blown the surplus left by the Conservative government. He is spending money that Canadians do not have. The billions of dollars that he is recklessly spending will come from our children, our grandchildren, our great-grandchildren.

Canadians get it. Why does the Minister of Finance not?

● (1435)

[Translation]

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question.

The Conservatives left a deficit. They left Canada's public finances in a sorry state. Fortunately, on October 19, Canadians chose growth.

In December, we launched our economic plan by lowering taxes for the middle class. We will keep moving with that plan by introducing the Canada child benefit in the budget. We have a plan to invest in innovation and productivity, as well as an historic plan to invest in infrastructure.

That is what it means to invest in the country's growth.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Albertans know that the handout from the Liberal government is symbolic at best. It comes only hours after Encana cut 20% of its workforce. Alberta does not want welfare or photo ops.

The Prime Minister talks to the Alberta premier about a transfer from the Liberal federal government to the provincial NDP government, and the government gets excited. However, it does not talk about shipping our natural resources.

When will the Prime Minister help Alberta sell its resources, instead of handing the provincial government borrowed money?

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know the global decline in oil prices is producing hardship for Alberta and other energy-producing provinces.

The global downturn in commodity prices has affected many sectors in the Canadian economy and we are closely monitoring the situation. However, with our large and diverse natural resource endowment, Canada remains favourably positioned to respond to the projected long-term growth in global demand for natural resources.

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government is abandoning Canadians. We left the house in order. In November, there was a \$1 billion surplus. That is a fact.

During the election campaign, the Liberals promised that they would run a modest deficit. They think that \$18 billion is a modest amount. The meter is still running.

How high will this number be in a month, when the budget is brought down? If the government has no control over revenues as it says, then does its much-touted plan include provisions for controlling spending?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question.

Only the Conservatives think that we can use a two-month period to determine whether there was a surplus or a deficit during a fiscal year. The reality is that we have a plan for growth. We launched our plan in December, and we will continue down this path in order to create growth.

The time has come to invest in the Canadian economy. That is what Canadians asked for on October 19, and that is exactly what we will deliver.

Oral Questions

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, where is this government going to get the money to finance its out-of-control spending? The Liberal “party” has begun. Taxpayers and SMEs across the country are worried about this government's lack of responsibility. Canadian companies have lost faith in the government. The Liberals need to be honest: they are going to get the money to pay for these astronomical deficits from taxpayers' pockets.

How does the government intend to stop this hemorrhage of money and start acting responsibly?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his question.

Economists agree that the time has come to invest in the economy. The only ones who do not understand that are the members opposite. At a time like this, we need to invest in the economy. We need to generate economic growth. That is exactly what the Liberal plan seeks to do.

In the upcoming budget, we are going to invest in innovation. We are going to invest in productivity. We are going to make the investments that the Conservatives did not make for 10 years in infrastructure, green infrastructure, and our communities. That is what is going to generate growth in this country.

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● (1440)

[English]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport's first act was to kill the Toronto Island Airport expansion. He unilaterally ended consultations on expanding the Toronto Island Airport to accommodate what he called the best aircraft in its class, the Bombardier CSeries. Expanding the airport would create jobs that do not require taxpayers to pick up the tab.

Why is the minister letting internal Liberal Party politics limit economic development in Toronto and block new jobs at Bombardier?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is right. I said the CSeries is the finest aircraft in the world in its class. I am delighted that Air Canada has decided to buy 45 of them from Bombardier and possibly another 30.

Not only that, it is going to support putting into place the centre where the maintenance of this aircraft could be done for the next 20 years. This is going to create jobs. This is good for Bombardier. This is good for the aerospace sector. The member should be very happy about it.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we all know that the Liberals like to go on about their pseudo-transparency. However, we have learned that a secret committee was established in December to examine the issue of fighter jets and the shipbuilding strategy.

Why are there so many secrets behind closed doors?

Have the Liberals already decided to abandon Canadian shipyard workers and have the ships built abroad?

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is determined to implement the national shipbuilding procurement strategy and purchase its ships in Canada in an open and transparent manner. A decision has not yet been made regarding the requirements for large tugs, and therefore the project is still in the preliminary phase.

[English]

As with all military acquisitions, our goal is to leverage economic benefits for Canada.

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CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the arts and culture sector employs 150,000 Canadians and contributes \$8 billion to our economy. Conservative cuts damaged the sector and threatened good jobs. After pledging \$150 million for the CBC, and \$25 million for Telefilm and the National Film Board, the Liberal Minister of Canadian Heritage is now waffling.

Canadian artists deserve a straight answer. Will the Liberals keep their specific promises on funding for the CBC and film granting agencies, yes or no?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will reinvest in CBC/Radio-Canada and we will help the arts and culture industry in this country.

Why? Because we believe in it and there has not been a lot of funding over the past 10 years for arts and culture in Canada. We pledged to do it and we will continue to invest because we believe that this is part of a true innovation policy in Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, did the Liberals believe in the promises they made during the election?

The world of television is changing dramatically. Workers are worried about the new CRTC rules, which will go into effect next week. Thousands of jobs are at stake. The minister must take action to protect workers in cultural industries.

During the election campaign, the Liberals promised to inject \$150 million into CBC/Radio-Canada and \$25 million into Telefilm Canada and the NFB, as well as doubling the budget for the Canada Council for the Arts.

Will the minister finally keep her promise?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

The media world is presently facing technological challenges because consumers are required to choose different content in different ways. That is why we will not only reinvest in CBC/Radio-Canada and various cultural institutions, but also hold public consultations that will enable the different industries, including the media, to understand how to seize the opportunities of the digital age.

* * *

● (1445)

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the American general in charge of the coalition's air combat task force against ISIS was surprised to learn that Canada was withdrawing its CF-18 jets when he saw the story on CNN. So much for consulting our allies.

Since the government failed to properly advise our allies, and since Parliament has yet to vote on the Liberal's non-combat mission against ISIS, will the Minister of National Defence stand with our allies and put our CF-18s back in the fight?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that we are in the fight with our coalition partners. I would also like to remind the member of the comments of the Secretary of Defence. The coalition commander, who I spoke with directly, said that the plan was forward-looking. I spoke to the ground force commander, who was the former commander of the 10th Mountain Division, who I also got to serve with.

I can assure the member that the coalition wanted our plan, and this is the exact plan that is needed, because this fight against ISIL can only happen on the ground.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no one actually talked to the combat mission for the air task force. General Brown said that our aircraft have been “pounding these guys so hard” that ISIS has been unable to launch any major offences and is losing territory. He also said that Canada was “one of a handful of countries” that had the flexibility to “act on specific targets and in specific areas”. He went on to say, “We welcome [the CF-18s] back if the opportunity presents itself...and the political leadership changes its mind”.

Why is the Liberal government opting out of the combat mission against ISIS? This is not a fight anymore.

Oral Questions

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member spent time as the parliamentary secretary for defence in previous years, and I commend him for his service, he should understand the meaning of chain of command. I talked to the coalition commander, the ground force commander, and the Secretary of Defence. When I talk to them, they speak for all the people who work for them, and they like our plan.

I would remind members that this fight against ISIL can only happen on the ground, not from the air.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat a third time.

Charles Brown, the American general in charge of the coalition's air campaign, was very disappointed to hear that the CF-18s were being withdrawn. He said, and I quote, "It is kind of sad to see them go. I realize that for your operators who fly the CF-18s, your pilots, I think they are a little disappointed...I would probably be feeling the same way. We welcome them back...if the minds there change."

The general in charge of the coalition's air campaign is telling you this, minister. When will you allow our CF-18s to return to combat?

The Speaker: I remind the member to address his comments to the Chair.

[*English*]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to commend our pilots for their great work.

As I stated, we had a very thorough analysis of this and of moving forward. When I spoke with the ground force commander, the first question I asked was, "What do you need?" He said, "intelligence".

I am happy to sit with my critics and explain the reasons. But with an enemy, over one year, they get much smarter. The only way to target them is on the ground. This is the reason we have tripled our training mission and doubled our intelligence capacity.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, combat is the foundation of Canadian Armed Forces soldiers' jobs once they have finished their required training. It is important for soldiers to know whether they will be participating in combat operations on the ground.

The United States has declared that it is at war against ISIS, and France has said the same. This is a fundamental issue for our soldiers.

Can the minister tell us whether Canada is at war against ISIS, yes or no?

[*English*]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not fully understand the member's question. It is very simple. If it means we are defining fighting against ISIL and defeating it, we are committed to it. We have done it in the past. We will assess the situation. This is what is needed on the ground right now.

• (1450)

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the economic downturn has hit Alberta workers hard. Despite losing their jobs, through no fault of their own, laid off Albertans are at a disadvantage compared to other Canadians. They work longer to qualify for EI and then receive fewer benefits. Alberta's Premier Notley and Edmonton's Mayor Iveson are asking the Liberal government to address EI. Albertans appreciate the stabilization grant, but they also deserve fair access to worker benefits.

Will the government act now, today, to assist Alberta families?

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are aware of the serious situation facing those workers in Alberta, Newfoundland and Labrador, Saskatchewan, and different parts of the country. We are working hard to reform EI, which has been neglected and does not serve any Canadian, basically.

More importantly, we want to ensure that Albertans and those who have been hit by the commodity crisis are dealt with fairly and honourably as soon as possible, and that is what we are working on at this time.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my region also needs help. Workers at a car dealership are struggling to make ends meet after three years of being locked out, and seasonal workers cannot figure out how to survive between seasons.

The Liberals were highly critical of the EI reform when they were in opposition. Now that they are in power, all we get from them are meaningless answers.

Will the minister promise to no longer dip into the EI fund and finally help our workers who need help now?

[*English*]

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yes, we are interested in hearing from Canadians on the best way to approach changes in EI. We are going from coast to coast to coast, listening to our own House of Commons committee, women, indigenous people, working Canadians, to find a solution that meets our needs as Canadians that are on the job.

*Oral Questions***HEALTH**

Mr. John Oliver (Oakville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian health care system is relied upon by all Canadians for access to universal, high-quality, and comprehensive health care, helped by collaboration between federal, provincial, and territorial jurisdictions.

The previous health accord, negotiated in 2004, has lapsed. There remain many shared priorities before us, including home care, health innovation, access to prescription drugs, and mental health.

Can the Minister of Health assure the House that a new health accord will be negotiated with the provinces and territories?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question.

We agree that the health care system needs to be modernized. I have already met with my provincial and territorial counterparts to implement a new agreement that will enable us to address a number of shared priorities, including access to home care and mental health care, to better meet Canadians' needs. I will keep my colleagues posted on developments in the weeks to come.

* * *

[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Vladimir Putin is playing the long game in Russia's illegal occupation of Ukraine. Putin is trying to convince the world that the crisis in Ukraine is over, but as Andriy Parubiy, the deputy first chair of the Ukrainian parliament reminded MPs here yesterday, Ukrainian soldiers and Ukrainian civilians are still dying every day.

Sanctions are keeping pressure on the Russian leadership.

Why are the Liberals so desperate to normalize relations with Putin?

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada stands steadfast with Ukraine. We always have and we always will, and we will continue our unwavering support for the Ukrainian people. This is well beyond partisanship for all of us.

Engaging in dialogue with Russia is not the same as agreeing with Russia. We will speak clearly, bluntly, and directly, and we have been explicit in our condemnation of Russia's unlawful annexation of Crimea.

As the government of Ukraine stated last month, “[We] believe Canada will be strong and firm in its pressure on Russia”.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I remind my hon. colleague that 10,000 Ukrainians have been killed, and 1.5 million Ukrainians are still displaced. While the military aggression and the illegal occupation continues, Putin is now trying to destabilize Ukraine politically with proxy candidates in local elections.

Ukraine is asking Canada to maintain sanctions. Is the minister aware just how concerned Ukraine is about Canada's support? Is the government's commitment to Ukraine quietly fading?

• (1455)

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Russian interference and invasion of Ukrainian territory is completely unacceptable. The question now is how to communicate this in the most effective and strongest way to Russia.

Canada is always interested in constructive engagement with a range of countries. Engagement is not about agreement. It is about holding countries to account.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Amnesty International released a report today that highlights the disastrous human rights situation facing Muslim Tatars in Russian-occupied Crimea.

Enforced disappearances, the abduction, killing, and torturing of activists, and cultural vandalism leave many wondering if the 1944 mass deportation will be repeated.

We hear of engagement, dialogue, and reset, but things in Russia and Russian occupied territories keep getting worse, so why is the government still cozying up to the Putin regime?

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we welcome the Amnesty report. It highlights a significant positive change that this government is taking in the area of human rights.

Amnesty praises our leadership in resettling 25,000 refugees and applauds our commitment to launch an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women, something the last government refused to do. We have also abandoned the arbitrary process of the last government by committing to seek clemency for all Canadians facing capital punishment.

It is no wonder Amnesty International applauds this government.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last month I urged the Prime Minister to stand up for Canadian families who have been waiting too long to bring adopted children home from the DRC by calling President Kabila and asking for 16 exit visas.

No phone call has been made, and no progress has been made, despite the fact that this past week, the DRC issued exit visas to American and European adopted children.

To the Prime Minister: Will you pick up the phone and call President Kabila?

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is concerned about this file. We are aware of the visas that have been granted to American adoptees.

*Oral Questions***IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

We have a plan to speak with the foreign minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Our minister has spoken with him in the past. We will continue to be engaged on this file. We know the file involves many Canadians, and they are interested in seeing their adopted children at home, and we will make sure that happens very quickly.

The Speaker: I once again remind members to direct their questions to the chair. I do not need the word “you” around here unless you are talking about me.

The hon. member for Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Wollaston Lake, a northern Saskatchewan community of 1,800 people, is running out of fuel and food. Mild weather has made the ice road across Wollaston Lake unsafe, so there is no way to get supplies. The chief and council of Hatchet Lake First Nation warn that they may have to close their school and health centre, thanks to the shortage.

What will the government do to help schoolchildren, sick people, elders, and the rest of the community get the supplies they so badly need?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her ongoing vigilance on the files.

The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of winter roads and being able to get supplies to these remote communities. We know that a reliable network is essential. Because of climate change and because of this short season, we are really in trouble in terms of this kind of access that is no longer there. We are monitoring this and will work with the communities to find out how we can get their vital equipment there as soon as possible.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, northern Manitobans and people in northern Saskatchewan need action now from the federal government. Thanks to an unusually mild winter as a result of climate change, ice roads to all isolated communities in northern Manitoba opened late and some are not even open at all. It is increasingly impossible for communities to get all of the vital supplies they need, like housing materials, food, and fuel. In Manitoba, the Prime Minister campaigned on partnering to support the East Side Road, which would provide a long-term solution.

Will the Prime Minister keep his promise and work with isolated first nations so they can meet their needs this winter?

• (1500)

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member's question demonstrates how really widespread this problem is, from Saskatchewan to Manitoba, to northern Ontario. The short season, because of the mild winter, is really crippling communities, because they cannot get essential supplies in. We are going to work together to do that, but then we know that we need long-term solutions.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the immigration minister told Canadians that less than half of the Syrian refugees are now in homes. In December, he told the House that we should look to the private sector for solutions for the Liberals' lack of planning to meet their election quotas. For Conservatives, these are people, not numbers or photo ops.

When will the minister come clean and admit that the Liberals did not have a plan in December and they do not have a plan now? How long will he continue to treat refugees as numbers rather than people?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member should check his facts. Yesterday I said that more than half had gone to permanent housing, not less than half. I think he should get his facts right.

It is a bit much for the Conservative side to be saying that Liberals do not treat refugees as people. I am the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, thanks to our Prime Minister's concern, and we are committed to bringing 25,000 people, who are refugees, to live and thrive in this country, by the end of the month—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I have complete faith in the security organizations responsible for evaluating Syrian applications.

I have been told that, during security screening, if there is the slightest concern for Canadian security, the application is rejected immediately. However, so far, nobody has been able to tell me how many applications have been rejected for national security reasons.

Can the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness tell us how many applications have been rejected? Is it one, five, 10, 200, or more?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the system that is in place to protect security in relation to the Syrian refugee project has been designed by the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, with the expert advice of the CBSA, the RCMP, and CSIS. They have done their job exceptionally well, and at the end of the project when we have all of the information about how successful it has been, we will be happy to share that with the House.

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we all know that the security of Canadians should be the number one priority for any government. We all know, as well, that the Liberals have been putting Canadians at risk by fast-tracking refugees into the country in order to meet their election quota.

I have a simple question for the minister. Of the total number of refugees accepted, what percentage were given extra security screening?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the system we have put in place was designed with the best expertise in Canada, and I am very pleased to say that the commissioner of the RCMP, the director of CSIS, and the president of the CBSA have all said, on their own volition, that they believe the system is thorough and satisfactory and that it is accomplishing the Canadian objective, to get this humanitarian project done and get it done properly and safely. That is in fact the case.

* * *

*[Translation]***ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE**

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have 23 years of experience with the Codiac Regional RCMP, and I was always proud to work with my colleagues in a respectful environment. All RCMP employees deserve a healthy, harassment-free workplace.

What is the minister doing to ensure that police officers and civilian staff have a respectful, healthy, harassment-free workplace?

• (1505)

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our election platform provided a clear mandate to ensure that the RCMP is indeed a healthy workplace. Sexual harassment is never acceptable.

On February 4, I asked the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP to undertake a comprehensive review of RCMP policies and procedures to evaluate the implementation of recommendations against harassment, which were made by that commission in 2013.

Instances of harassment must be met with comprehensive, transparent investigations, strong discipline, support for victims, and action to ensure a safe and respectful environment going forward.

LABOUR

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was quite shameful to learn earlier this week that the Minister of Employment does not believe that private members' bills are important pieces of legislation. In the last Parliament, many private members' bills were brought forward on important issues on both sides of the floor.

On this side of the House, I am proud to say that we encourage our members to bring forward important issues from their constituents and private members' bills on issues important to all Canadians.

The employment minister is muzzling union members by taking away their democratic right to a secret ballot. Why is the Liberal government muzzling their own members by discrediting private members' bills?

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we want to clarify that Bill C-4 is here to reset a stage that is fair and balanced. Each individual collective bargaining unit can decide on its own system that it chooses to use, whether it is the card system or the voting system. The point of Bill C-4 is to bring fairness and balance, something that was missing because of the other side.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, six months ago, my constituent, Alison Azer, experienced one of the worst nightmares a parent can ever face. Her four children were taken by her ex-husband. Alison has reason to believe that her children are now in Kurdistan in northern Iraq. Today she is here in Ottawa, urging the government to do everything it can to help bring her children safely home.

Could the minister please inform the House and Alison what actions the government is taking to ensure the safe and immediate return of her children?

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his tireless work on this important file.

Our government remains committed and deeply concerned about the safety and well-being of the Azer children. We have been in constant and regular contact with Ms. Azer. In fact, I met with her yesterday and spoke with her again today before question period. I want to assure the House that our officials are working closely with government authorities here and abroad, including law enforcement agencies.

I want to take a moment to recognize Ms. Azer's strength and commitment. I want to assure her and the House that we are very committed to the return of her children safely at home.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, St. Catharines is home to the Port Dalhousie piers, which served as the terminus for the first Welland canal, on which St. Catharines very existence was at one time reliant. Under the previous government, this important landmark and popular tourist destination was abruptly closed due to safety concerns.

Could the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans please update the House on the Port Dalhousie piers review and his department's work with the City of St. Catharines to revitalize and maintain the piers for future generations to enjoy?

Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member and the people in his riding that the department understands the significance of these piers to the community and that they are an important local tourist attraction.

Access to the piers has been restricted in order to protect public safety. We have recently received follow-up engineering reports and will work with the city on assessing short- and long-term repair options.

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TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Andrew Scheer (House Leader of the Official Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Liberal chair of the heritage committee was awfully concerned that nobody was regulating the content of the Internet. As we speak, there is just a whole lot of Internet going on out there—what with the emails and Google and the kids twittering. She is worried that “Anyone can put anything out there”. When Al Gore invented the Internet, he did it in a way that protected free speech.

We know that the Prime Minister has great admiration for dictatorships like China. Is the current government going to take a page from the original red book and start stifling free speech?

• (1510)

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand the importance of technological changes and the culture that is in line with these technological changes, and that is why our government is committed to really looking into the opportunity of—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. Let us settle down, folks. We want to hear the answer to that question. I know members are anxious to hear the answer.

The hon. Minister of Canadian Heritage has the floor. We will have order.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Clearly, Mr. Speaker, there is no issue with free speech in this House.

We will launch a public consultation on the digital shift in order to really see the opportunity, but not only that, to really understand the impact the Internet may have on users and creators in general.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

AIR CANADA

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, “It is such a shame that we have to demonstrate to ask the law and order government to obey the law. It is ridiculous. We are losing the types of jobs that we need in this country.” That is exactly what the current Prime Minister said in 2012, when he was standing side by side with the Aveos workers. I could not have put it better myself. The law is clear and it guarantees jobs at home in Quebec, in Canada. The two rulings against Air Canada are clear, and it is just as clear that Air Canada has complied with neither one.

Is the Prime Minister prepared to enforce law and order in Canada?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, naturally I am very pleased to learn that Air Canada is going to invest in Bombardier's CSeries aircraft. That is good news. It is also going to support the implementation of a centre of excellence for the next 20 years. That too is good news. When I was answering the question from the hon. member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, I heard the hon. member for Beauce say that no one wants to buy the CSeries. I would like him to explain what he means.

[English]

Mr. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Yesterday the House refused its consent to table the November “Fiscal Monitor”, which showed the Conservatives left the Liberals with a surplus. Of course, the December “Fiscal Monitor” shows that we left them with an even bigger surplus than the November one. I seek unanimous consent to table the December document.

The Speaker: It sounded like debate there for a while, but the member did ask for unanimous consent to table the December document. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1515)

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaties entitled, Agreement Between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on Air Transport, done at Port of Spain on June 29, 2015; and Agreement for the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments Between Canada and the Republic of Guinea, done at Conakry on May 27, 2015. An explanatory memorandum is included with each treaty.

*Routine Proceedings***DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES ACT**

Mr. Ahmed Hussien (York South—Weston, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-227, An Act to amend the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act (community benefit).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to introduce my first private member's bill, with support of the member for Scarborough—Rouge Park, on community benefit agreements (CBAs) and federal spending on infrastructure.

CBAs are a new approach to development and growth in neighbourhoods all across Canada. CBAs create community wealth, quality jobs, training, responsible growth, and a healthier environment. CBAs empower communities to make development work for them. CBAs are about fairness and broad community participation in the development process, resulting in everyone getting a slice of the development pie.

My riding of York South—Weston has a section of the Eglinton crosstown LRT project, a project that has embraced a community benefits approach and is a great example of a community that would benefit from CBAs being a component of federal spending on infrastructure projects.

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

* * *

● (1520)

FISHERIES ACT

Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-228, An Act to amend the Fisheries Act (closed containment aquaculture).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill, seconded by my good friend, the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, which would strengthen the Fisheries Act by requiring British Columbia fish farms to move from harmful open-net pens to safe, closed containment systems. My bill would direct the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to develop, table, and implement a transition plan to move to closed containment, while ensuring protection for those who are currently working in the industry.

The science is clear: B.C.'s wild salmon is in a vulnerable state. Transitioning to closed containment will help protect our wild salmon from sea lice, pollutants, and other harmful substances that come from open net farms. Canada has the potential to be leaders in closed containment technology.

This important legislation is a step toward ensuring our wild salmon will remain healthy for generations to come. I hope all members of the House will support it.

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

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LIFE MEANS LIFE ACT

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-229, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts (life sentences).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce the bill today. The bill would ensure that judges and juries would have the option in sentencing to ensure that those who were convicted of heinous crimes would not walk the streets of our country again.

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

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CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-230, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (firearm—definition of variant).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to table this important legislation today in the House for first reading.

The term “variant” is used 99 times in the regulations in the Firearms Act to classify firearms. However, it is not actually defined anywhere in the legislation. This vagueness has resulted in a number of inconsistent and confusing classifications over the years that were based on an interpretation of what variant was meant to mean.

This legislation would provide a definition for “variant” to ensure that we would have a very clear, consistent, and fair firearms' classification system. It is not a controversial bill.

I look forward to working with all my colleagues in the House on both sides, including the government, on this very important legislation.

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

FIGHT AGAINST FOOD WASTE ACT

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-231, an act to establish National Food Waste Awareness Day and to provide for the development of a national strategy to reduce food waste in Canada.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to introduce this bill today, seconded by my colleague and friend from Victoria. It is a very important bill. I am not sure if members are aware, but we waste a great deal of food in Canada, which is a very rich country. According to a report published in 2014, we waste roughly 31 billion dollars' worth of food in Canada alone. In the current context of ever-increasing food insecurity, and considering the rising cost of food, it is extremely important that Canada show some leadership on this matter.

This bill calls for a national strategy. It also calls on the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food to work with his provincial and territorial counterparts, and for the designation of October 16 as national food waste awareness day.

I hope that I will have the support of all my colleagues in the House and that we will work together to ensure that we do better in this area and eliminate food waste in Canada.

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

• (1525)

Mr. Luc Thériault: Mr. Speaker, the Premier of Saskatchewan made some extremely disparaging remarks about Quebec. Some people even described it as Quebec bashing. That is why I am seeking the consent of the House to move the following motion: That the House of Commons condemn the disrespectful remarks made by the Premier of Saskatchewan regarding Quebec.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

[English]

PETITIONS

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from some 50 of my constituents who call upon the House of Commons to undertake public consultations to amend the Canada Elections Act in respect of electoral reform.

CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to rise in the House to present three petitions.

The first petition is on an extreme form of bullying and is perhaps appropriate on Pink Shirt Day for anti-bullying.

The petitioners call on the House to help stop torture. They are calling on Canada to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture, which has been ratified by many countries, such as Germany, the United Kingdom, Norway, and Denmark. Canada has yet to ratify it.

PHARMACARE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition from constituents in my own riding calls on Parliament to work toward a national pharmacare plan to reduce drug costs through bulk buying of pharmaceuticals and to reduce the cost through evidence-based research to ensure that drugs are also effective.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): The third petition, Mr. Speaker, is also from constituents of my riding as well as the Edmonton area.

The petitioners call for the labelling of genetically modified foods.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand at this time.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE EFFORT TO COMBAT ISIL

The House resumed from February 23 consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as always it is a great honour to stand in this House and represent the people of Timmins—James Bay. I never take this honour and the task that they have given me to do lightly. I also say that there is no role that we as parliamentarians can take that is more important than the decisions that have to be made in putting men and women of our armed forces into harm's way in a foreign theatre.

Since I have been here, I have been through many of these debates and many of these motions. Over my time here, I have been fed a heavy diet of jingoism and rah-rah and two-dimensional claims that, if we look back, in the light of day did not stand up. Whenever we have these debates, we need to think about what it is that we are being called upon to do.

I would like to say that what concerns me here is that we have, once again, a reactive policy about a region that is the most explosive in the world. This has been the unfortunate response over the last dozen or so years of not having a proactive, clear direction. It has put our soldiers in harm's way and it has added to the destabilization of an already crisis-ridden region.

Nobody is arguing against the monstrosity of the group called ISIL. We do not need to compare the torture-porn stories of what that awful group has done. What we need to do is say what is the best way that we as a nation with a proud military history, but also a proud nation-building legacy, can do in this fight.

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What really disturbs me about the present Liberal government is that it is not being truthful to Canadians. The Liberals talk about pulling the planes out, but now, as the minister said today in the House, the fight will be won on the ground, the targets will be found on the ground. This is an expansion of a combat mission. It is important if we are going to have a combat mission to say it is a combat mission. That is the first part of being honest with Canadian people. Once they have identified what that mission is, then they can start to talk about the parameters of the mission and the goals of the mission. However, to be completely vague and misrepresent what our soldiers would be doing on the ground is to do a disservice to this House and it will lead to long-term consequences.

I remember back in 2006, when we had the first debates on the mission into Kandahar. What drove the Paul Martin government at that time was pressure from the United States for having made the wise decision not to go into Desert Storm, which was widely supported by the Conservative caucus, the Alliance Party, and the wild acclaim about how we had to go and save civilization by getting ourselves involved in this illegal war in Iraq.

We commend the previous government for not going in there. It was that wrong-headed invasion that created so much of the instability and horrific death levels and created the grounds that we see for groups like ISIS today. As a result of having offended the Bush administration at the time, the previous Liberal government was under pressure to show that we could be good allies. That was the sense, and we heard that to be playing with the big boys we had to do our part so we voted in this House to send our soldiers into Kandahar without a clear understanding of what was on the ground in Kandahar. Our soldiers went into the toughest parts of that firefight.

We in this House had all kinds of language that this was nation building, but we did not even know what was happening on the ground. We had no forward-looking vision. The New Democratic Party at the time asked what the targets were in terms of the goals to show that we had actually succeeded there. We asked another important question at the time: Who are our allies on the ground? We asked where our allies were, because we went into Kandahar alone. At that time, I remember even lines like, "Oh, it's about putting boots on the ground." They threw the Neville Chamberlain thing around, "Oh the NDP are being like the 21st century Neville Chamberlain". The job of Parliament should have been to ask where our allies were, going into Kandahar.

We now see this today. Major General David Fraser, who commanded the military's alliance into the mission in 2006, has said that the west made a serious mistake in going in to fight the Taliban.

• (1530)

I was very surprised at his statements. He said that we did not learn the wrong-headed lessons of Iraq. This was the general charged by Canada to go in there. This is not to denigrate in any way our efforts to fight what was a brutal and awful regime, or the incredible work that our men and women did under really difficult conditions and made us all very proud.

However, this Parliament failed those soldiers because we did not have a sense of the clear objectives, to have the major general tell us

today that we did not do what we were supposed to have done and now we have more instability.

Let us fast-forward to Libya and the vote we had in the House on the bombing mission in Libya. At the time we supported it. We were going to stand as a House united, because there was such deep concern about what was happening on the ground in Libya in terms of potential killing and atrocities by the Gadhafi regime. Nobody in the west had any real clue what was really happening on the ground in Libya, so we thought, "Well, we will bomb them. Then things will be okay."

Then we turned our attention away. The mission was over. Mission accomplished. Now we have a completely destabilized situation in Libya, which is very close to the southern belly of our European allies. We completely failed.

We cannot go and bomb another country without a plan on the ground. What is it going to look like in the long term? This is where I plead with my Liberal colleagues for the incredible vision that was set forward in the 20th century with Mike Pearson, that Canada was going to play a role, that we were going to be the nation builder. We were not just going to be the little brother who went along with the gang. Canada established a reputation that was very unique at the time.

Unfortunately, I feel we have been failing in this mission. It is like we have developed this attention deficit disorder on international affairs. An issue will come up for a little bit, we think we have dealt with it, we will bomb them, we will send in the planes, and then we will move on.

Now we have an extremely destabilized situation in Libya. Then when the ISIS onslaught happened in Mosul and the horrific slaughter started, we went there. We sent members from each party to northern Iraq to find out what role Canada should play. At that time, the allies on the ground in Iraq said they did not need Canada in a bombing mission. They needed Canada to help with the humanitarian crisis they were dealing with. That was what they asked for.

We went in. We started the bombing mission in Iraq, without any clear idea, again, of who our allies were on the ground. Then we extended it to Syria, where we have even less knowledge.

The present Prime Minister said we were going to pull the planes. I think that was a wise move. Now, we are going to be expanding the mission in Iraq.

In the last Parliament when we were debating this, I asked my hon. colleagues in the Conservative government at the time what the plan was. A simple question, what is the plan? What are our objectives? Who are our allies on the ground? They shouted to me and said that they were going to kill bad guys. That is not a foreign policy. There is no shortage of bad guys over there. My question was, "Who are the good guys?"

Let us look at our allies. We could say we have Saudi Arabia. Those are our allies. Saudi Arabia, which is completely destabilized in the region, in terms of creating a conflict, the Sunni-Shiite proxy wars in Yemen, in northern Iraq. Canada is sending billions of dollars in military aid to Saudi Arabia that is already being used on the ground. Our weapons are being used in the Yemeni war, on both sides. The Saudi human rights record is horrific. The Saudis have also caused untold economic damage to Canada, trying to beat us in this oil war they declared. Those are our allies on the ground.

Now we are getting ourselves into a Sunni-Shiite conflict in Iraq where we have no clue of what the outcome will be.

Let us look at our friends, the Kurds in Turkey. Turkey is a NATO ally. I refer to *The Guardian*, November 18, 2015, that talked about the key groups on the ground who could fight ISIS: the PKK, the Kurdish Democratic Union. They are the ones that could take ISIS out. It says:

In the wake of the murderous attacks in Paris, we can expect western heads of state to do what they always do in such circumstances: declare total and unremitting war on those who brought it about. They don't actually mean it. They've had the means to uproot and destroy Islamic State within their hands for over a year now. They've simply refused to make use of it. In fact, as the world watched leaders making statements of implacable resolve at the G20 summit in Antalya, these same leaders are hobnobbing with Turkey's president Recep Tayyip Erdogan, a man whose tacit political, economic, and even military support contributed to Isis's ability to perpetrate the atrocities in Paris, not to mention an endless stream of atrocities inside the Middle East.

• (1535)

Canadians deserve better than the mishmash of excuses we are getting from the government. We are sending our men and women to war and we have to do better. We owe it to them.

Mr. Arnold Chan (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I take to heart much of what my friend from Timmins—James Bay said. In my address in this place a few days ago, I raised many of the same issues that he raised. In particular, I raised concerns with respect to a post-conflict era in which, for example, the bombing in Libya has now led to a profoundly difficult situation on the ground.

Does he believe that we should go back to a Pearsonian view, one in which we had the type of mission that took place when it was brought forward by this side of the House, the government at the time, by Mike Pearson, back in the 1950s and 1960s, or are we in a different era? Does he support, for instance, some of the other initiatives that the government has brought forward in this motion, which talk about investing in diplomatic initiatives in the region, investing in humanitarian aid, and other initiatives that could provide the basis for a more stable region in the long run?

• (1540)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, the issue of how we make the Mike Pearson vision in the 21st century is what we really need to be looking at. Part of that is having a long-term vision. We cannot do it by misrepresenting an extension of a combat mission. That is why we are there, first and foremost. We are not there under a UN mandate. That is first.

There is a huge role Canada can play, but given our recent track record and lack of ability to actually look beyond the short-term goals, we are leaving ourselves in a situation for a long-term war

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without having the credibility that we are going to be going in there afterward as a nation builder. Nobody is going to believe it.

This is a good discussion, but we need to be honest about the parameters of how we are engaging there.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hon. member has highlighted, with which we all agree, that it is a complex region. There is really a lot of complexity in terms of different interests and factions.

I wonder what he thinks about the idea of collective security, in particular. Canada has been attacked by Daesh; our ally, France, has been attacked in a significant way by Daesh. I would argue that we have an obligation to respond because of our collective security commitments.

Yes, it is complicated; yes, we have to do our best to think about where we go from here. The reality is that we have been attacked and it is appropriate that we respond and support our allies as well.

What are his thoughts on the principle of collective security?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, the issue of collective security and our role on the international stage is a fundamental question for Parliament. I would take exception that ISIS came to our shores, as the former prime minister claimed, and attacked us. I was here when that gunman came. That was a man suffering from severe mental illness, who tried to get himself arrested in a McDonald's with a stick. To claim that this was a foreign force that landed on our shores and attacked our nation diminishes the tragedy of what happened and the loss of such a powerful young man as Corporal Cirillo.

It also means that we cannot jump every time someone with a gun stands up and is crazy. That is not collective security. That is using these tragedies as an excuse to further other aims. I believe that Canada as a nation is bigger than that and we will only be bigger than that if we do not give into that kind of misrepresentation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

He talked about our country's history in this respect. Does he agree that a mission with no set end date is a problem? Does he think that kind of mistake was made in the past? Does he think that we are once again making that same mistake by embarking on a mission with no end date?

*Government Orders**[English]*

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I was raised by my grandmother. She never got over the horrors of what happened in her neighbourhood when every young man on her street was killed. While I grew up, she said, “Charlie, never fall for politicians who send young boys to be killed”. That is the issue here. We have to be honest with Canadians. We are sending them into a combat mission. We cannot say anything else because we are sending young men and women into harm's way and I hear my grandmother's voice every time.

I hear the jingoism that sometimes runs around the House. We have a responsibility to be truthful. We have a responsibility to have a long-term plan. We have a responsibility to come to Parliament with a clear plan of getting in, getting out, and building a long-term sense of stability and peace in that region.

• (1545)

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to open by expressing my gratitude and the gratitude of my constituents for the Canadian Armed Forces personnel who have served and continue to serve for the cause of peace and humanity in Operation IMPACT.

We must never forget our men and women in uniform, our fellow Canadians, who stand at the ready to go to the heart of danger to confront the threats to our nation. We must never forget the families of the Canadian Forces personnel who endure the separation and the stress of having loved ones deployed to confront danger on behalf of all Canadians.

As the government undertakes its so-called refocus of Canada's contribution to the Middle East stabilization force coalition, I find myself, among many Canadians, questioning the logic of the refocus. We have all seen the brutal and barbaric atrocities that follows ISIS anywhere it goes. Its beliefs and ideologies are a scourge in the regions where it exists and proliferate. ISIS wields an ideology that must be confronted like an infectious lethal disease.

ISIS, as such, cannot be remedied by partial measures and half-steps. ISIS cannot be allowed to evolve and gain the ability to adapt and become more resistant to the current methods of treatment.

ISIS has declared war on Canada and our allies, and has proliferated beyond the region of its birth, killing innocent civilians in terror attacks in areas previously thought immune, much like a mutating disease that spreads and kills those who do not expect it.

Despite these self-evident realities, the government is not willing to stand with our allies and provide one of the strongest remedies that we have to fight the spread of this blight. We know our jets made significant contributions to the battle so far and could continue to make a difference in containing the spread of this infectious ISIS.

When we look back to the incident of this past December, when Canadian personnel on the ground came under fire, what might have been the result had our CF-18s not been in the region and been able to perform the precision air strikes to destroy the attackers?

However, the government has pulled our fighter bombers from the fray with one hand while deploying an exponential number of boots on the ground with the other. Can the government explain the logic

in expanding Canada's presence on the ground while eliminating our air support in the same step? What assurances do our personnel have that the elimination of air support will not affect the security on the ground?

I failed to mention, when I first stood, that I would like to share my time with the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

Even the government's own members have stated that defeating ISIS will require multiple tools and methods of attack. When we have the proper tools to wage a battle, why would we leave the most effective tool stored in the tool box and look at others to achieve success without it? Why not use all of the tools?

This includes the CF-18s, along with the ground training, and humanitarian support, where Canada is already one of the leading donors as approved by the House in 2014. Is it because the government has come up short on dollars? Is it because it sees our economy struggling under its management, or is it simply because the government does not support our air force and pilots?

I listened the other day to a radio interview with the mayor of Cold Lake, Alberta, where our military pilots are trained for missions such as this fight against ISIS. I could hear the pent-up feelings in the mayor's responses. He stated that our Canadian pilots are always happy to return home to their families, especially after a mission, and their whole community supports their mission and the reason they are there.

He stated how the pilots are proud of their contribution, and how that pride spreads throughout the entire community and their families. They have trained for years to fly these types of missions and now they are being told they are not needed.

If the government is not willing to have our pilots fight an enemy when this fight is there, then when can we expect them to fight?

• (1550)

What incentive is there for new pilots to enlist and train if they know they will be held back from doing the job they are training for? Canadians train some of the best pilots in the world and now they are sitting on the sidelines when they are needed the most.

Our CF-18s flew 251 air strikes. There were 246 in Iraq and 5 in Syria. They successfully delivered over 600 munitions. It was a significant contribution and one we should continue.

It is our role and duty as parliamentarians to provide the men and women of our Canadian Forces with the best tools available to protect our personnel and our mission allies. Pulling our CF-18s out of the mission is an abandonment of this duty, something that I as a parliamentarian will not support.

Last week, a member of the House stated here that ISIS stands against everything that we value as Canadians and poses a direct threat to our people and our friends. The member who stated this was none other than our Prime Minister. He went on to state: “ISIS threatens peace and democracy with terror and barbarism. The images are horrific, the stories are appalling, the victims are many”.

This is a statement I agree with, but the question that begs to be asked is, why would we remove our fighter bombers from the fight against such an enemy? If the Prime Minister truly believes that ISIS stands against everything we value as Canadians and poses a direct threat to our people and our friends, then why would he order the removal of the most lethal contribution we have against the fight?

The statements of the Prime Minister and his actions do not add up, and Canadians know this. I have received messages from constituents through phone calls, emails, and people stopping me on the street, asking about their safety. These people are concerned because they have seen how the lethal and radical ideology of ISIS has inspired violence beyond Syria and Iraq. These Canadians are concerned for their safety here in Canada, far and away from the source of the danger, but still concerned.

Unless we step up, not step back, and eliminate the risk to our safety at its source, then we all take the responsibility for allowing the spread of ISIS, just like a mutant disease.

If the government is truly interested in what Canadians think about ISIS then it should be taking every action possible to eliminate the root cause of the madness and violence that has ravaged Syria and Iraq and has spread its shadow now across the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and more.

ISIS must be defeated. The Canadian Forces personnel deployed on this mission deserve every tool they need to strike ISIS and defend themselves as needed.

If the government is sincere about helping the people of Syria and Iraq, who have suffered the most under ISIS, then the government must look beyond the symptoms of the disease and act decisively and eliminate that disease.

Does the government really believe that Canada's contribution to the fight against ISIS will be more effective without our fighter bombers? Perhaps the Prime Minister and his government believe that the 267 ISIS fighting positions bombed by our jets were of no consequence, that the 102 ISIS vehicles and equipment pieces bombed by our jets were of no consequence, that the 30 ISIS improvised explosive device factories and ISIS storage facilities bombed by our jets were of no consequence.

The fact of the matter is that our fighter bombers were effective tools in the fight against ISIS. There seems to be consensus in the House regarding the barbaric nature of ISIS and the necessity to fight it. I sincerely hope that the government will reverse its campaign promise to withdraw our fighter bombers and redeploy them in the fight against ISIS to protect our men and women on the ground.

● (1555)

[Translation]

Mr. Ramez Ayoub (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think that my hon. colleague has been obsessed with CF-18s for some time now.

Is there just one solution? The answer is no. On October 19, Canadians made their choice clear.

In the papers recently, we read about a new poll showing that over 50% of Canadians agree with the current government's decisions. I

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would also like my colleague to know that I am of Syrian extraction. I was born in Aleppo, a city that has been destroyed.

There has been no collateral damage yet, but what does my colleague think of what planes, friendly or otherwise, can do?

[English]

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, our fighter bombers in Iraq and Syria have been very precise with their strikes. There has been no collateral damage caused by our fighters and their bombs, and the pilots are well trained. We can be proud of the missions they have served. They have done well and we would like to see that continue.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed the speech by my colleague and the question I have for him is quite simple. The concerns that have been raised about the group of brutal thugs that is ISIS, or ISIL, are that money, arms, and foreign fighters are fuelling their ability to continue to conduct their series of murderous acts in the areas where they have managed to make some progress.

The government announced and brought forward a motion to us. It seems to be expanding the mission, which I think the Conservatives would agree with, but it has not chosen to crack down on the flow of money to ISIS, which is a major issue; to crack down on the flow of arms that go into those areas; and to provide or put in place the deradicalization programs that have worked in other countries and have actually cut off the supply of foreign fighters.

I am wondering how my colleague reacts to the fact that the Liberal government has not taken action in the three areas that would make a difference and seems to be stepping down from its campaign commitments to scale back the mission, and instead put the emphasis on cutting off the funds, cutting off arms, and cutting of foreign fighters.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, the mission to this point had been effective in cutting off the flow of money to the ISIS fighters.

We all know that they were selling their oil or stolen oil on the black market. Our fighters and the coalition fighters were very effective in taking out those oil trucks, those supply depots, that were supplying the oil that was funding this process.

We are supportive of increasing the effort against ISIS, but we are simply opposed to the government's withdrawal of the CF-18s as one of the most effective parts of that fight.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I too served in Cold Lake and my husband was a CF-18 pilot. I would like to say that he, like all pilots of the Canadian Forces, was well trained and very proud of the job he did. The pilots are helping and have done what they wanted to do when serving.

I ask the hon. member opposite, are the jobs of people who are not fighter pilots somehow less valuable than those of fighter pilots?

We need to understand that the men and women who will do this change in mission are no less valuable than the fighter pilots. I would like to put that to the hon. member.

● (1600)

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, certainly every last member of our coalition forces is of high value.

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It is like a team. When we take a team into a championship game, we do not leave our best players locked out of the locker room. We make sure they are involved in the game.

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to address this issue in the House.

Before I start my main remarks, I just want to pick up on something that my NDP counterpart talked about with respect to the importance of cutting off the funds to ISIS. I certainly do agree with him that it is a big part of the fight against ISIS. One of the best ways of doing that is to take Canada out of the market for Middle Eastern oil. If we had a pipeline that ran from western to eastern Canada, we would not need to go to the market for oil from that region. Therefore, I hope we will see him support the various pipeline projects that are being proposed to do just that, to make it easier to isolate any oil that could be coming from ISIS-controlled areas, because we would then have clean, ethical oil from Alberta and Saskatchewan, which is exploited in an environmentally sensitive way.

Coming back to the main motion, I understand that there are a lot of complex issues in the Middle East. There have been many different conflicts over vast periods of time. We in the west have the safety of our secure and established democracies. We live under the benefit of the rule of law and have an independent judiciary. With all of the benefits that we have, it is sometimes difficult to understand all of the issues going on over there. Some of us, from various political stripes and at various times, make pronouncements or decisions about what the west should do, what NATO should do, and how we should fight various things. Sometimes that works well and sometimes there have been extra problems created because of various interventions in the Middle East. However, on this issue there is no one on our side in the west among our NATO allies who disagrees. This is easy to understand. It is easy to build a consensus on this issue that ISIS must be stopped, that it poses a very real threat not only to the region but also around the world as it exports its terrorist activities.

What is that threat? It is not like some other types of conflicts where there is a civil war because someone wants a regime change, because one faction wants to control a state or a government, or one ethnic group wants to liberate themselves from a country where a different ethnic group is more dominant. This is a genocidal organization. These are people who subscribe to a radical form of jihadi Islam who are not satisfied with having a different kind of system. They are not satisfied with exerting control or gathering riches. They will not be satisfied until anyone who or anything that does not conform to their radical world view is not just conquered, but actually killed. That is what we are dealing with.

We will look at what Canada's role is in this fight. Canada has such a proud tradition of doing our part, and often doing more than our fair share and punching above our weight. When we look at the brave men and women who sacrificed themselves against other kinds of genocidal evils throughout Canadian history, Canada was there. Canada was there eager and willing. We joined the fight against the Nazi forces and fascism before our American neighbours. We were there from the beginning because we recognized that every country around the world that believes in these fundamental ideals of

democracy, the rule of law, and human rights has an important obligation to take part in it.

What we have heard from the Liberal government is that Canada cannot be effective, that our air force is too small, and that the number of air strikes is minimal. I have heard numbers thrown around that because we are carrying out only 3% of the air strike missions, what is the point of continuing if our contribution is so small. However, NATO is made up of many countries of different sizes, and many of those countries have similar sized air forces or are making similar contributions. What if they all backed out and withdrew from the fight the same way the Liberals are doing here? Then, our 3%, plus a few others in the 3%, 4%, and 5% range would all be withdrawn. The end result of that would once again be to turn to our neighbours and say, "You pick up the fight. You pick up the slack. We'd like to have a say in what goes on there, we'd like Canada to be a presence in the world, and we'd like you to listen to us when it comes to various issues at the UN or in other forums, but we're not willing to do the heavy lifting and we're withdrawing from the combat role." Members should make no mistake that we are withdrawing from the combat role.

In question period today the Prime Minister almost said "combat". It half came out of his mouth and then he quickly stopped himself and went back to the training mission. However, I think it is telling that the Prime Minister does not even want to say the word "combat". I do not think I have heard it from any one of my Liberal counterparts. In fact, I invite them to stand up during questions and comments and say whether Canada is still part of the combat mission against ISIS. Are we still trying to fight terrorism? Are we still trying to kill terrorists before they kill innocent human beings?

● (1605)

I would also like them, if they could, to name one ally who asked us to withdraw our CF-18s. We have heard from various ministers and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of National Defence say that, no, this is all good, that we are optimizing our contribution and that many coalition partners do different types of jobs and that we all contribute in different ways. I can buy that for sure when many different people are contributing what they are good at or with the tools they might have. It makes sense that when one can do something better than another country, but on the air strikes, our country is proud of our tradition in the air force. We have the best pilots flying excellent equipment and actually making a difference, actually destroying targets and destroying military type installations that have been used and would have been used again to persecute innocent religious minorities, innocent men and women. Our pilots have helped in the fight against those terrible terrorist entities and can look back at the contribution they made and say, "we saved lives". Our men and women in the Air Force absolutely saved lives.

There are innocent human beings, Yazidis, Christians, different types of Muslim minorities, who are alive today because of the contributions of the RCAF. That is something I think all members can agree that we should be proud of.

Can the Liberals name one ally, one coalition partner, who said, “Canada's RCAF CF-18s are really getting in the way and messing things up here and we would have a much more optimal mission if you would just withdraw your CF-18s, because the fight against ISIS would be so much better without them. Stop bombing the terrorists. Please take your jets home and our mission against ISIS would be much more optimal and effective”. I do not think they can because not a single ally would say that, because it is ridiculous.

In fact the men and women in the military around the world who are fighting ISIS say something different from their political masters. The Prime Minister is very proud when he can trot out a quote from President Obama or secretaries of state, who say nice things about Canada. Of course, we know that in international diplomacy the title holders rarely say anything that would condemn an ally. We know there are many diplomatic things going on, but it is very telling when the generals involved in the fight tell a different story, and that is what we have from Lieutenant-General Charles Brown, who said that it was kind of sad to see Canada pull the CF-18s out and that he hoped that Canada would have a change of heart.

That is very telling, that the people who are actually on the ground, who actually know what the mission is about and the logistics of it all, not the politicians who have to make 30,000 foot level decision, but the actual people who know what kind of hardware we need, what types of contributions we need from our allies, say this. When they say it is sad that Canada is pulling out the CF-18s, that is very telling. That is the real story. I am sure that our American neighbours, the pilots in the American air force, the British air force, the French air force, miss us. I am sure they wish they had our six CF-18s and that we could be part of the rotation. It is ridiculous to suggest that somehow the mission against ISIS is better because there are six fewer jets doing bombing runs in the area.

I want to talk about one other thing before my time expires. I remember the debate when the previous Conservative government consulted Parliament on the mission against ISIS. I remember that during question period Liberals warned that the personnel on the ground who were training troops and painting targets, and doing all the things that the Liberals are now saying our troops will be doing, were engaged in what was the equivalent of a ground combat role. They were criticizing the fact the previous government had anyone on the ground doing any kind of training and any kind of painting. Now we are being told that not only is that better than the air strikes, but it is still not combat. So these were combat roles when we were doing it, but not when the Liberals want Canada to do it because the people on the ground will be painting fewer targets or will be training less hard, maybe a little farther from the front lines. It does not make any sense. They are saying one thing in one Parliament and a different thing in another Parliament.

One thing Canadians can be sure of is that if there is consistency on this issue, it is to be found in the Conservative Party, which has always stood in defence of ethnic and religious minorities around the world and is not afraid to call radical jihadi terrorism what it is and fight the fight with our allies against ISIS.

•(1610)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I

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listened to the member opposite and I agree that his comments were aptly described as ridiculous. We do not take foreign policy advice from generals on the ground. We negotiate with our partners in NATO. We do not take a bombing mission and say that it is the only way to deal with the situation. In concert with our allies, we have constructed a way to solidify and make permanent the ground gains that the bombing have provided us with an opportunity, and we are now moving forward with a training exercise.

Why would the members opposite not understand that a change in tactics is not walking away from the fight, and a change in tactics to invest in even more resources is not lessening our impact in the region, but simply changing our mission, investing more into the mission and trying to accomplish more than simply bombing targets, trying to actually set up a stable and livable environment so that ISIS does not have the ability to recruit or sell its oil?

Mr. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, the hon. member must not have listened because he completely misunderstands the point. There was no negotiating with our NATO partners on this. It was a Liberal campaign promise that the Liberals would pull our jets out. Is the member suggesting that Gerald Butts and his team sat down with our NATO allies before they made the campaign promise? No, they made the campaign promise that no matter what happened, if they were elected, they were pulling the jets out. It was a unilateral decision. It was not made in concert with NATO partners or allies. The Liberals just said to the world that they were pulling our jets out and how can we mitigate that.

When it comes to solidifying our mission, we are doing that with less. Our jets, up until the other day, were bombing targets, were destroying military-type installations, and were killing terrorists who were intent on killing innocent human beings and ethnic minorities. Our jets were putting a stop to that, and the Liberals have stopped them being a part of that. That is lessening our mission.

There is nothing to say that we cannot do training and the bombing mission. The Liberal government has decided to stop our combat role against ISIS.

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle and I both ran for the first time in the 2004 federal election. He was elected that time; I took a somewhat more roundabout route to the House.

The member for Regina—Qu'Appelle began his speech by talking about how some previous interventions in the Middle East had caused more problems. I assume the member is acknowledging that the Conservatives were wrong to have called for Canada to participate in the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

One of the problems with that intervention was that it had no clear endpoint or exit strategy. Could the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle explain to us what he sees as being the endpoint and the exit strategy from the campaign he is calling for in Iraq and Syria?

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Mr. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, I do acknowledge that my colleague and I did have some shared memories together in 2004. Although Regina—Lewvan is right beside my riding, I was hoping for a different result in the election. However, it is good to see the member make the contribution he is, and I wish him a bit of luck in his parliamentary career here.

I want to warn him, however, about assuming anything; we all know what happens when someone assumes.

The member asked a very specific question about the end game on this mission. In my view, there can be no safety, security, or peace in the area as long as there are people like the members of ISIS out to destroy innocent human beings every day. Their world view is something completely incompatible with any peace-loving nation, Islamic, secular, or otherwise. We cannot count on an area to be stable if there are elements like ISIS in it.

The end game for NATO and for the UN is ultimately to destroy ISIS. It starts with limiting its capability, and that starts with degrading its ability to launch attacks and to invade areas. Hopefully, with the assistance of our allies in Iraq, the Kurds, Turkey, and other countries around the area, they can build up their own forces to do that.

However, the point is that our jets are making a meaningful impact in all of those aspects. Whether it is currently degrading ISIS, whether it is in the short-term limiting of the ability for ISIS to launch these kinds of attacks, or, in the long term, to provide that peace and stability after eliminating ISIS, our jets are a big part of that. Our air mission was important and it was meaningful.

• (1615)

Mr. Raj Saini (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

It is with great honour that I rise in this place to add to this very important discussion.

It is extremely important that we view this mission through two distinct lenses: one, defeating ISIS; and two, restoring stability to the region. Without both of these conditions being met, there is no chance of long-term success.

There are those who would suggest that we are stepping back from this mission. This is simply not true. This government is choosing to re-engage in this mission in an unprecedented manner. We want to take actions that are meaningful and that will make a difference in the long run. It is misleading to think that bombing campaigns alone will be able to defeat ISIS.

We are not suggesting that bombing campaigns are not useful or that they should be stopped. Rather, we are saying that we have different skills to offer and that we can best serve our coalition allies by shouldering other burdens.

Given the contributions of the United States and others to the mission, it is important to ensure that other aspects of the mission are not ignored. It is important to understand why bombing alone will not lead to the defeat of ISIS.

ISIL is not a state and does not have any defined territory. Yes, it has gained control of territory, and yes it is essential that allied forces regain control of that territory, but ISIL was a threat before it held territory and it will continue to be a threat after it loses its territorial holdings.

Humanitarian assistance is not simply about providing aid to people in need. Humanitarian assistance is essential to ensure that ISIL does not get a foothold by taking advantage of those most desperately in need of help.

Those displaced by this conflict have lost everything. We have seen in other conflicts that those who are in the most desperate of circumstances are vulnerable to being radicalized. It is understandable that a group that is willing to provide food, clothing, and shelter to one's family might cause one to become sympathetic to that group. Even those who disagree with the goals and methods of ISIL can be tempted to join it, if it means their family's most basic needs will be taken care of.

[*Translation*]

That makes it even more critical for us to bring help to the people in that region, to those who have had to flee their homes and who have no idea what normal is anymore. Their lives have been turned upside down. It will be extremely difficult for them to get an education. Taken together, their desperate circumstances create the perfect conditions for radicalization.

[*English*]

ISIL has proved especially capable when it comes to propaganda and disinformation. It is not difficult to imagine circumstances where a whole generation of displaced youth are drawn into ISIL or another of its surrogate organizations across the region.

However, while ensuring food, water, and medicine get to where they need to go, it is not enough. When the coalition regains ISIL-controlled territory, those who have been displaced will not simply be able to go home and resume their lives. Attacks from both sides have left infrastructure in shambles. Schools, hospitals, and government buildings have been destroyed or damaged beyond repair. This is why our government is pleased to invest \$270 million toward building local capacity to delivery services.

The values of these contributions cannot be overstated. In order for these societies to rebuild themselves, we need to ensure that basic infrastructure is in place so that their journey toward rebuilding is as smooth as possible.

In addition to this, we are going to be significantly increasing our training and advisory mission. It is extremely important that we understand the necessity behind a robust and all-encompassing training mission. Despite what some on the other side would claim, our allies are pleased that we are stepping up the training aspects of this mission.

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• (1620)

It is extremely disingenuous to state that the United States government believes anything other than what it has said publicly on this issue. Pentagon spokesperson Peter Cook had this to say, “The Canadian announcement is the kind of response the secretary has been looking for from coalition members as the United States and our coalition partners push to accelerate the campaign against ISIL.” When pressed on specifics, he had this to say about our new role, “... we consider those very significant contributions and we welcome those contributions from the — from the Canadians...this is a critically important part of the campaign”.

This does not sound like an ally that is disappointed in the direction our mission is taking. Rather, it sounds like a partner that understands and appreciates that Canada is stepping up its contribution to the coalition.

According to Kurdish sources, over 70% of peshmerga casualties to date are caused by IEDs. That is over 1,200 casualties. Air strikes will not help local forces identify and disarm IEDs. It is extremely crucial that local forces are properly trained to locate, disarm, and dispose of IEDs and other weapons in a safe manner. This is why the training mission is so critical to the long-term success of the mission.

[Translation]

In closing, I would like to talk about our allies in the region. We are very proud of our commitment to welcome tens of thousands of refugees. However, that number is small compared to the number of refugees and displaced persons who have been welcomed in Jordan and Lebanon. The numbers suggest that more than one-third of the people currently living in Lebanon are refugees or displaced persons.

Let us put that in perspective. The equivalent for Canada would be to welcome 12 million refugees. Even with the best intentions in the world and a desire to help, those numbers would overwhelm our system in ways we cannot even imagine. That is why we must help our allies manage this challenge. It would show a serious lack of vision if we were to focus our efforts only in Syria and Iraq and ignore our allies.

[English]

Canadian foreign policy has always been underscored by the desire to play a role that has the greatest effect and the most meaningful impact. This is what we are doing today. ISIL represents a grave threat to international security and regional stability. It is not enough to regain territory and defeat ISIL. It requires the ability to hold and defend territory. Once ISIL is pushed back, it must never again be able to achieve the foothold it now has.

Without providing adequate training to local forces, we are simply telling ISIL to bide its time until we are gone. We will not allow this to happen.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was listening attentively to the member's speech. He talked about allies, so let us talk about our allies, the courageous Kurdish peshmerga from the Kurdish regional government fighting ISIS, fighting these terrorist organizations.

Let us talk about Falah Mustafa Bakir, who is the foreign minister. He said, on the air mission continuing:

We would like to tell them that the air strikes have been effective, they have helped us a great deal. They have helped save lives. They have helped to destroy the enemy. And if it were for us [to decide], we request that to continue.

What does the member say to the minister of foreign affairs for the Kurdish regional government who is asking for these to continue?

• (1625)

Mr. Raj Saini: Madam Speaker, what I am saying is that we understand, and it is well-documented, that the majority of peshmerga casualties happening right now are happening because of IEDs. IEDs will not be located by air strikes. We want to be effective, we want to have a meaningful impact, and we want to save lives. In that situation the only way we can do this is to have trainers on the ground and people who can help the peshmerga find the IEDs, and cut their casualties.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, this is my opportunity to ask a question so that the member can clarify his own position and his party's position on this combat mission. He and his colleagues are saying that this is not a combat mission, even though they will not put it that way. They are also withdrawing from the air strikes. This leads us to believe that they do not think air strikes are effective. Why, then, will we be painting targets for our allies to bomb, and why will we be refuelling the planes that will be doing the bombing? How does the member square those two statements? The Liberals do not think air strikes are effective, yet they are helping our allies conduct air strikes.

[English]

Mr. Raj Saini: Madam Speaker, on the contrary, our government has been very clear, during the debate and during our process, that we will take a holistic, whole-of-government approach to this.

We will involve more than one minister. We will involve the Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, the Minister of National Defence, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

What we are saying is that we need to provide regional stability to the area. We need to make sure that our men and women who put themselves in harm's way have the right equipment. We are trying to bring regional stability to that area.

That is a whole approach that we need to take. That is an approach that our allies have asked us to take. That is the approach that the Canadian government has decided to take.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's effort to bring in the opinions of others.

I just want to get his comment on the opinion expressed by Colonel Steve Warren, spokesman for Operation Inherent Resolve:

...everybody likes to focus on the airstrikes...because we get good videos out of it and it's interesting because things blow up—but don't forget a pillar of this operation, a pillar of this operation, is to train local ground forces. That is a key and critical part.

Does the member think that this mission, as proposed to this House, responds to the concern of Colonel Warren?

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Mr. Raj Saini: Madam Speaker, absolutely, it responds.

It responds to the needs of the mission. We are trying our best as a government to respond to that mission, to align our needs and the needs of the coalition, to make sure that bring regional stability to that area, but more importantly that we have a meaningful impact on this mission.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will start by thanking hon. members for the opportunity to take part in this important discussion regarding Canada's refocused approach to the situation in Iraq and Syria.

As we debate our future involvement, I would like to take a step back for a moment from the military operation itself and thank the brave men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces for all they do. These courageous individuals put their lives on hold, leave their families behind, and risk everything. They make these sacrifices so we can enjoy the peace, security, and freedom we too often take for granted. They do all of this with honour, professionalism, and humility.

There are countless examples of individuals who have defended Canadian values at home and abroad throughout our proud history. In fact, as we stand here today discussing Canada's future involvement in Iraq, we should remember that for our Canadian Armed Forces members, this debate is about so much more than words.

They are out there now, helping to keep us safe, protecting our way of life, and promoting a Canadian vision of a more peaceful world, a more tolerant world. They are serving in Iraq and in many other international missions. They are serving here at home and on daily operations, protecting our airspace and maritime approaches with NORAD. These people deserve our thanks and support. They deserve to know that we stand behind them always. They deserve to know that we recognize their sacrifice.

There are many ways to do this. I realize that some of these may not seem like much, but it is often the little things that mean the most. Quite possibly the easiest way to show gratitude to our troops is by taking a moment to post a message on the online message board that can be found on the forces.gc.ca web page. Not only is this easy to do, it is free. It can be done as a group project, together as a family or in the classroom.

We can also buy a variety of official Support Our Troops merchandise from a CANEX store in communities or from their online site. All proceeds from the sales of Support Our Troops items are in turn reinvested directed into morale and welfare programs for members and their families. This is a very important initiative.

We can also donate directly to Military Family Resource Centres. These centres, located on bases across the country, provide support to the families of CAF members who are dealing with the challenges of military life.

For those of us who are looking for other ways to contribute financially, there are many programs available under the Support Our Troops banner. I'll mention just a few.

First, the military families fund provides support to military families who are experiencing urgent and extraordinary financial

demands. It also offers rehabilitation, education, and financial assistance to families of military members who have experienced injuries, or death, due to their service.

The soldier on fund supports ill and injured military personnel with permanent or chronic disabilities. This fund helps both serving and retired members and their families maintain an active and healthy lifestyle.

The hospital comforts program provides for the care and comfort of Canadian Armed Forces members confined to hospital from injury, illness, accident, or surgery.

Then there is Boomer's legacy. This program was created in honour of Corporal Andrew "Boomer" Eykelenboom, a dedicated soldier and a Canadian Forces medic who was killed in Afghanistan in 2006. The mission of Boomer's legacy is "helping our soldiers help others". The program honours Boomer's humanitarian spirit, so that members of the Canadian Armed Forces who are serving on deployments around the world can help those most affected by war and poverty. It places a particular emphasis on providing health care and education services for women and children and the most vulnerable.

As Canadians, we are known for our generosity and strong social programs. It should be no different when it comes to supporting our military members and their families. The men and women who work for these programs would be grateful for any contribution.

We owe a lot to our military members. I think it is only fitting, as we look at the way forward, that we remember that they are the one essential piece in all of this.

The success of the Canadian contribution to this military mission ultimately depends on the people who carry it out. We ought to take time to recognize this in whichever way we can.

● (1630)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have been asking government members throughout this debate if they would be willing to use the word "genocide" to describe the violence against religious minorities committed by Daesh. It is a simple question.

Of course, we agree that it is terrible what is happening, but is the government willing to identify that what is happening, what is being done by Daesh, is genocide? Is it willing to use that word?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge encompasses a large Iraqi, Christian, and Kurdish community. I am all too familiar with what has occurred in that region over the last several years. I have reached out to many members of the community and recognize what has gone on there.

It is important that we as a government maintain our presence in the region, which we are doing. We are putting heavy emphasis on humanitarian aid for the region. It is over \$1 billion over three years to help those most impacted by what is going on there and what Daesh is doing.

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•(1635)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be able to ask my colleague a question. I thank him for his speech.

Over the past few days, we have not heard anything in this debate about the deradicalization efforts we could be making in Canada. NDP members are practically the only ones talking about it. Nevertheless, during a recent visit, the Secretary-General of the United Nations congratulated the City of Montreal on its efforts to combat radicalization.

It is unfortunate that the government is not talking about a strategy and funding to combat radicalization in our country. ISIL's recruitment of foreign fighters is a problem. We need deradicalization programs in Canada, and not just local efforts, although those are important too. We need to develop a national strategy to limit radicalization so that foreign fighters do not leave their countries to join ISIL.

Can my colleague assure us that his government will commit to making bigger investments to combat radicalization? It would be a very effective way of limiting ISIL's numbers.

[*English*]

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, our government's policy is clear. Our policy is to refocus our efforts in Iraq and Syria and bring a whole-of-government approach to enhance security and stability to the region. We have laid out these initiatives, including a contribution of \$800 million in humanitarian assistance over three years and a further \$300 million to help rebuild infrastructure within the region.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I welcome my colleague's comments, especially those about how members and the public who may be listening to this debate can support the men and women in uniform and veterans who no longer wear the uniform.

I want to ask my colleague about the internal defence programs for supporting injured men and women in uniform, that is the JPSU, the joint personnel support unit, and the IPSCs, the integrated personnel support centres. When the Liberals were in opposition they said these units were not doing a good enough job but there was no real improvement. Now it is clear. They certainly were not doing a good enough job.

What does the member think about the idea of reviewing and improving the support provided internally to injured forces members?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, our platform laid out a robust policy to help soldiers returning from missions all over the world. We laid it out during the election. Over the coming weeks, we will see it. It will help soldiers reintegrate into society through education, as one example. If they are injured when they return, they will receive appropriate funds to help them contribute back to Canadian society.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): 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 Jonquière, Canada Post.

[*English*]

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to split my time with the hon. member for Banff—Airdrie.

I rise today to address the Liberal government's motion to cease air operations in Iraq and Syria.

The Liberals state that they want to redefine our contribution to the effort to defeat ISIL, in part with the addition of additional members of the Canadian Armed Forces but while removing air support at the same time. However, removing air support will only serve to put our men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces at greater risk.

I agree with the assertion of the Minister of National Defence when he said that we have to win the war on the ground, but doing so without overhead protection from our CF-18 fighter jets makes no sense. How can we send members of the Canadian Armed Forces into the line of fire without adequate air guard?

As minister of National Defence and Foreign Affairs, I travelled to the Middle East on a number of occasions, and time and time again, my counterparts in Kuwait, Iraq, and the United Arab Emirates reiterated just how important Canada's contribution was with our CF-18s.

Our fighter jets have been very effective in taking out ISIL and other targets as well as in depleting ISIS resources. The Canadian Armed Forces, by all accounts, have severely disabled ISIS' infrastructure and senior personnel. They have truncated its ability to manoeuvre in large numbers, shattered moral, and allowed Iraqi forces to retake towns like Ramadi. They have effectively taken out oil resources and have thus curtailed ISIS' means of funding its so-called caliphate.

Following up on the comment by the Minister of National Defence about winning the war on the ground, this is exactly what Iraqi officials told me when I met with them. They said that it has to be won on the ground, but it has to be won by them. They said that we are making it possible, with our air strikes, for them to hold on to the territory they have within Iraq. It has allowed them to retake the land that was taken from them, but they need that support in the air. They made that very clear.

The deployment of the RCAF Griffon helicopters for close combat aerial support in fact is inherently more dangerous than bombing ISIS' fighting positions with our CF-18s. What the new government has accomplished in forging ahead with its plan is to highlight just how incoherent it is.

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The Conservative Party of Canada supports providing our troops with whatever equipment it needs, whether it is helicopters or fighter jets. The Liberal government has no justification whatsoever for withdrawing the CF-18s. I have to tell members that I am disappointed. Before this debate even began, the Liberals ceased the air strike operations.

We owe it to the brave men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces to offer them the confidence that we have their backs and are defending them from above while they are engaging with the Iraqis and Syrians on the ground. The parents, sons, daughters, husbands, and wives of Canadian Armed Forces personnel deserve to know that their government is doing everything possible to ensure the safety of their loved ones while they defend their rights, freedom, and democracy on the ground. What they do not want to hear is that their government is incoherent in terms of what it is that it is trying to do.

I have to point out that the Liberals are offside with Canadians. Not surprisingly, 63% of Canadians say that they would like to see Canada continue bombing ISIS at its current rate or go further and increase the number of bombing missions it conducts.

Canada understands that ISIS has declared war on Canada and our allies. The Liberals should understand that. Canadian Forces involved in the advise and assist mission have already been drawn into firefights. We have to make sure that we do not put them at greater risk, and I believe that is exactly what will take place if we get out of the business of air strikes.

I emphasize that the men and women of the Canadian Forces warrant the assurance of knowing that they are protected at all times, in particular by our CF-18 fighter jets. The Iraqis understand that very clearly, as do our other coalition allies. They know, and we know, that ISIS seeks to destroy the very fabric of our nation. The Prime Minister himself has stated that people terrorized by ISIS every day do not need our vengeance. They need our help.

● (1640)

Canada continues in the fight against ISIS, and the work we do is an important part of the coalition. How is it that our Prime Minister does not understand that we cannot begin to help the people of Syria and Iraq unless we confront ISIS? It is only in its defeat that the people of that region will be able to regain their sovereignty and rebuild their lives.

I admire our allies. They are not sitting on the sidelines and watching while others do the heavy lifting. As I said before, in my role as the defence minister and foreign affairs minister, all our coalition partners thanked Canada profusely for the effective role our CF-18s played in preventing ISIS from overtaking their respective countries. This is what we are talking about: preventing ISIS in Iraq and ISIS in Syria from forcing its ideology on not just those countries but on the rest of the free world. That, of course, includes Canada. Standing on the sidelines has never been our way.

I remember in the early 1990s, after Iraq invaded Kuwait, former Prime Minister Mulroney calling us into the government lobby and telling us what had happened and talking to us about his conversation with the president of the United States. Prime Minister Mulroney made it clear that it is not Canada's role to stand on the

sidelines when people are being abused. There was unanimous support for the idea of standing with Kuwait at that particular time.

I have to say that on the occasions when I have visited Kuwait, the people there have made it clear again and again that they are appreciative of what Canada did when they were in desperate need.

That is exactly what I hear from our allies in Iraq. At the present time, throughout the Middle East, they are grateful for what Canada is doing and has been doing as part of those CF-18 air strikes.

I actually chaired a meeting in Quebec City a little over six months ago with our coalition partners. I ask the Liberals whether we are still part of that coalition in the sense that we have now withdrawn from that. Are we being ignored? Are we being forgotten about? Nobody wants that. We want to be a part of that.

Again, I am very disappointed that the Liberals are not doing what Canadians want or what Canadians have done, which is to not stand on the sidelines but to be a part of this. I hope that the Liberals will reconsider this and do what is right for the men and women of our armed forces and do what is right in the fight against ISIS.

● (1645)

Mr. Bob Bratina (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in October 2015, the United States pulled out the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* aircraft carrier, which had on it 65 aircraft. It was the first time since 2007 that there was no American carrier presence in the Gulf. Part of the reason for the removal of the carrier was budget cuts. The American military at the time said that there was no need to worry about losing the 65 aircraft, because they only did about 20% of the work, and the rest of it would be easily picked up by the larger air force flying off the ground in the theatre. Our contribution, apparently, seemed to be about 2%.

I would ask my colleague across the way whether he honestly believes that without the six CF-18s, our allies would not provide the cover for the troops on the ground, in view of all the aircraft that are available.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Madam Speaker, this is exactly what I have been saying. The point I have made in this House for the second time since we have touched on these debates is that is not the Canadian way to stand on the sidelines and tell everyone else they should be doing that.

Throughout Canadian history, we did not say we would not be sending Canadian soldiers, that the British and everyone else could do the work over there, that they could stand up for freedom and for those who are oppressed. That has never been the Canadian way.

I indicated what happened in Kuwait. Yes, there were other parts of the coalition, but Canada always does its share. We always do more than our share. That is what I have said on a number of occasions to our allies. We do more than our share, and that is what we should do. To say that it will be picked up by someone else, I completely reject.

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• (1650)

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the member from Niagara Falls and the other Conservatives. It is certainly quite clear that on this motion, they object to withdrawing the Canadian fighters, although one could argue that we are still very much involved in bombing, because we are using the Aurora surveillance aircraft, we are refuelling, and we are painting targets on the ground. They seem to have hooked their whole argument around the withdrawal of the CF-18s.

My question is on another part of the military mission. Do the Conservatives support what is proposed here, which is the expansion of the so-called training mission, which is in fact an advise-and-assist mission, that will put Canadian Forces members on the front lines and in danger of direct combat confrontations with ISIS? Do the Conservatives support that part of the Liberal motion?

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Madam Speaker, it is one complete package.

I support the mission we undertook, that we had approved by Parliament, which was an advise-and-assist role with respect to the soldiers on the ground. At the same time, and the hon. member made mention of it, the air refuelling and surveillance aircraft were an important component.

However, the key part of our contribution to the coalition against ISIS was the members of the Royal Canadian Air Force and the CF-18s. I can say that I did not run into any of our allies, whether they be at NATO conferences or the conference we held here in Quebec City with the coalition members, who said to me that we did not have to worry about sending our CF-18s. It was the exact opposite.

When I spoke to anyone, from the Prime Minister of Iraq to the foreign affairs minister and the defence minister, they were all very clear in saying that what we were doing in the air was helping them hold on to the territory they had and moving forward against ISIS. They told me that it was absolutely vital. They could not have been more appreciative of Canada's efforts.

Again, this is consistent with what we always do as a country. This is Canada's role, not standing on the sidelines and not, as was suggested to me here, hoping that other people will pick up the slack and get the job done. That is not what Canada is all about.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Madam Speaker, one thing we are simply not hearing from the government benches is the important and key role that the Royal Canadian Air Force has played in the global fight against ISIS.

I must underscore how our men and women in uniform have had a tremendously successful air combat role in Iraq and Syria. This includes eliminating many ISIS fighting positions, equipment, and vehicles, as well as factories used for the construction of improvised explosive devices and storage facilities. I am happy to stand here today and say what the Liberals will not, that I am proud of our men and women in uniform in the air force for the tremendous work they have done with our allies against ISIS. However, since the government unceremoniously removed them, we have not heard so much as a thanks for the air force's successful mission. I will add that

this removal happened before debate on this motion had barely even begun.

As of February 3, Canada's CF-18s had successfully taken out 249 ISIS fighting positions, 83 pieces of ISIS equipment and vehicles, and 24 of its improvised explosive device factories and storage facilities. Unfortunately, instead of recognizing the work of our men and women in uniform, the government is inaccurately characterizing Canada's contributions to the air task force. In fact, the Prime Minister recently stated that 600 members of the Royal Canadian Air Force are supporting only six CF-18 jets. This is simply not accurate.

The Royal Canadian Air Force personnel and aircraft are supporting the entire air task force coalition, including providing fuel from our Polaris refuellers to our allies' planes, sharing with the coalition the intelligence that has been collected by our reconnaissance aircraft, and assisting in targeting ISIS positions for our allies. Now, without any kind of a clear explanation whatsoever, the Liberal government is putting an end to our contribution to the coalition bombing.

The decision to abandon our air mission comes at a time when most Canadians want to continue our combat mission against ISIS. In fact, the majority of Canadians believe that pulling out our fighter jets will damage Canada's global reputation. An Angus Reid poll found that nearly half of Canadians, 47% in fact, think that this will have a negative effect on our international reputation. Further to that, only 27% told the Angus Reid Institute that they were on the same page as the Liberals, with their plan to stop Canada's airborne mission and focus only on training local troops in Iraq and Syria—only 27%. That same poll showed that a majority of Canadians, 64% in fact, believe that the global threat of ISIS is growing. Therefore, why are the Liberals ignoring the good work of our air force and thumbing their noses at the will of the Canadian people and, indeed, at our allies?

The brave men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces have a history of always being proud to do the heavy lifting on the world stage to protect the freedoms that we hold dear. This now includes degrading and defeating ISIS, a terrorist group that is committing mass atrocities, inspiring terror attacks around the world, and has declared war on Canada and its allies.

I have heard from my constituents how disappointed they are that the Liberals have decided to have Canada take a step back and withdraw from the airborne combat mission against ISIS. My constituents ask me why we are abandoning our allies when they need us the most.

Let me be clear that withdrawing from the combat mission against ISIS is a step backward for Canada. Our country has a long history of fighting for human rights and international security. In fact, a short time ago I was reminded of this very poignantly when I had the opportunity to deliver the eulogy for Ray Hoffman, a true Canadian hero who fought for the Calgary Highlanders in the Second World War. Ray served as an infantry machine gunner in Oldenburg on VE day in 1945 and then returned home to build his life in the town of Cochrane, Alberta, in my constituency. He is but one of many who have helped to shape our country's record of defending innocent and vulnerable populations by taking on those who commit mass atrocities.

Government Orders

We should stand shoulder to shoulder with our allies to stop ISIS, its enslavement of women and children, its barbaric treatment of gays and lesbians, and its mass atrocities against religious minorities. It is more critical than ever that we stand against this with our allies to keep people safe.

●(1655)

Let me be very clear: the acts of ISIS are barbaric. Families, villages, and cities are being systematically exterminated. This is barbarism. People are being burned alive. This is barbarism. People are being beheaded and their heads put on display. That includes children who are facing this horrific fate. This is barbarism. Gay men and women are being thrown off buildings to their death. This is barbarism. Women and children are being sold and sexually enslaved. This is barbarism. Those of the Yazidi faith have been marched to their death and shot in mass executions. This is also barbarism.

What is the Prime Minister's response to this barbarism? He recently said, "The lethal enemy of barbarism isn't hatred. It's reason". First, I am surprised that the Prime Minister managed to use the term "barbarism", considering that just a few short years ago he refused to call honour killings "barbaric" and instead stated that the previous Conservative government should make attempts at responsible neutrality.

On this side of the House, we are not afraid to call these heinous acts what they are. They are barbarism and we will stand resolutely against them. But let me also say this to the Prime Minister: no, the lethal enemy of barbarism is not hatred. The lethal enemy of barbarism is the resolute defence of democracy and freedom. It is standing up for the innocent. It is standing shoulder to shoulder with our allies. It is standing up for the minority Yazidis, Christians, and other religious and ethnic minorities. It is standing up for human rights.

ISIS is a terrorist group and its members inspire fear and have declared war on Canada and our allies. This is a just fight and we cannot step back now and expect our allies to do the work of defending freedom and human rights for us.

Make no mistake, Canada has been a key ally in the air combat effort. Our jets are a top five contributor in the anti-ISIS air strikes. On this side of the House, we strongly believe that Canada has the capacity to continue to contribute to air strikes, alongside training and humanitarian support. Canadian Armed Forces personnel have been doing so effectively for nearly a year.

I ask members on the government benches this. How can they claim to continue to stand with our allies and be a major partner in the fight against ISIS, standing with them shoulder to shoulder, when they have eliminated the very contribution that most directly protects the innocent civilians who are suffering mass atrocities on the ground?

If the Prime Minister truly believes that the enemy of barbarism is reason, then maybe he will use reason to recognize that our men and women in the Canadian Air Force have successfully been fighting this barbarism and will rescind his motion to withdraw from the airborne combat mission against ISIS.

●(1700)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments by the member, but just so that we are perfectly clear on this, in the last election when the issue of Canada's role was raised, I was fairly clear on what the party's position was, on what the leader of the party was saying. It should come as no surprise that there was a commitment to refocus the campaign in the Middle East. We indicated very clearly to Canadians, and the global coalition would have been aware of this, that Canada would be withdrawing its CF-18s in favour of doing other things.

There are significant other things that are being done, such as tripling the size of our training force, increasing the amount of humanitarian and development aid, increasing the diplomatic role, and expanding our capacity-building efforts. There is a lot there.

Would the member not at the very least respect what took place in the election and respect the fact that the coalition itself does have many other means? There is no one from the coalition saying, bring back the CF-18s.

I am wondering if the member would respect the reality of what the voters wanted to see happen.

Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member would respect the will of the Canadian people and the need for our men and women in uniform to be there as part of the fight, standing shoulder to shoulder with our allies. Would he respect the duty and job they have undertaken? I wish he would. I wish his government would. I wish they would show some respect for the fact that 64% of Canadians say they believe that the global threat from ISIS is growing.

There is absolutely no reason why our country cannot be there in a training role, providing humanitarian assistance and still be a part of the air strikes with our coalition partners. Why does the government believe that Canada is not capable, that our men and women are not capable of doing all of those things? We can and we should and we must.

It is a shame that the government does not understand and respect the will of the Canadian people and respect the men and women in uniform who are doing that job and doing it well.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I always enjoy hearing the member speak, but there is one question I am left with. Despite the commitments by the Liberal government during the election campaign to scale back the combat mission, what we are seeing is actually an expanded combat mission. There is no doubt about that. We have asked the Conservative members a number of times whether they support that expanded combat mission. We do not on this side. We will be opposing the motion because we believe that Canada should be putting its efforts toward cutting off the funds and the arms flowing to ISIS, as well as cutting off the foreign fighters. That includes deradicalization programs, which we have yet to see from the government despite the fact that many people in communities across the country have been calling for these.

Government Orders

There is an expanded combat mission and it is unclear to me where the Conservatives are going with this. Does the member support what is an expanded combat mission, which actually flies in the face of what Liberals committed to during the election campaign?

• (1705)

Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, my party and I support Canada standing shoulder to shoulder with our allies and being a part of the coalition in the fight against ISIS. That can entail a number of things, but one thing that very clearly has been effective and a key part of the role has been the bombing campaign. We have been a significant part of that, in fact one of the top countries in the world in our contribution to that effort.

For us to be pulling back at a time when Canadians see ISIS as a growing threat and when our allies need us the most, it is a shame. It is something I think the government should be condemned for.

We need to be there as part of the mission, part of the bombing campaign, to ensure that we are doing everything we can as a country to stand with our allies to stop this terrorist threat that is ISIS.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague from the beautiful riding of Sherbrooke.

I welcome the opportunity to debate in the House about how best to engage and defeat ISIS. I thank the House and the government for this opportunity.

New Democrats are glad to see three things in this plan: first, the renewed emphasis on diplomacy; second, the renewed commitment to aid conflict affected populations in the region; and third, the ongoing commitment for refugee welcoming and settlement in our country. We can all be proud of these things.

The NDP has always stood up for peace and I am proud to be part of that heritage. I am thinking today of my grandfather, John Osler, who was a pacifist. He stayed out of the conflict for as long as he could. During the Second World War he was finally compelled to serve in the navy and was proud to be part of that national commitment. He then ran for the CCF and worked in the labour movement. I am honoured to be his granddaughter and carrying on that discussion in the debate today.

The NDP has always been clear. Canada should focus on stopping the flow of arms, funds, and fighters, and we should do that work right here at home before anywhere else. We would have liked to have seen the government step up efforts in these areas.

I will speak to the first plan, stemming the flow of weapons to the region. Although the UN Security Council has passed three resolutions dealing with Iraq, none of them authorized a military mission. The UN Security Council did specifically require action on the part of all member countries to prevent the flow of foreign fighters and suppress the financing of terrorist organizations. As my colleague from Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke said, there has only ever been one terrorism financing conviction in Canada and that was in 2010, so we have work to do right here at home.

ISIL is earning between \$1 million and \$3 million every day in income from black market oil sales. We are never going to stop ISIL if we do not cut off that flow of money. We must seal the borders in the region against oil exports.

The Arms Trade Treaty would regulate the flow of weapons across international borders. If implemented on a global scale, it has the potential to starve the world's most brutal regimes of the money that they need to carry on their atrocious actions.

Although the Arms Trade Treaty came into effect more than a year ago, Canada, to its shame, stands alone among all NATO member countries that have failed to sign this treaty. The NDP has been pushing this issue for a long time both inside and outside the House, and we were glad to see the government campaign on and make a commitment to sign that Arms Trade Treaty.

However, for the last couple of weeks we have been asking in the House, when will the government sign the Arms Trade Treaty? The word yesterday or the day before was that the minister is seized with the issue but none of us know what that means. What does it mean to be seized? Maybe seized up and indecisive. I do not know, but we need to do this. It is embarrassing that Canada has not honoured that commitment and it would make a big difference. This is a decision we can make here at home that would affect the war against ISIS.

Again, there are other benefits to signing the Arms Trade Treaty as well. It would help us untangle the government's response to the Saudi arms trade deal.

It was reported this week that weapons being used by terrorists in Yemen originated in Canada, in Manitoba, of all places. We have work to do at home. Signing the Arms Trade Treaty would make us proud internationally and we could make a difference in the affected region.

We would love to have seen this mission, as articulated by the government, include a commitment to stem the flow of fighters by supporting de-radicalization efforts here at home.

• (1710)

We know that communities across this country have reached out to the federal government, both the previous Conservative government and now the Liberal government, imploring for help to protect youth from ISIS's very sophisticated recruitment techniques, yet the February 8 announcement did not include any domestic action against ISIS.

I asked this question all day Monday. Does the Liberal Party have a plan to address de-radicalization to help prevent Canadians from going overseas to fight with ISIS? I could not get any Liberal MP to tell me where that sits in their plan. I would still love to hear that it does. I would love to be surprised on this. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon said that over the longer term, the biggest threat to terrorists is not the power of missiles, it is the politics of inclusion. I would be proud if Canada honoured that work.

Government Orders

There are sections of both the Liberal and Conservative motions that we can support wholeheartedly, which is that yes, we express our appreciation for and our pride in members of the Canadian Forces who serve now and who have served in the past. We must absolutely do everything we can as a country to look after our veterans and to look after our men and women in service as well as we possibly can.

The Liberals got us into Afghanistan in 2004 with no endgame plan. Just like in Afghanistan, this mission feels like an open-ended military mission with no end in sight.

The Liberals are placing Canadian Forces deeper into a conflict zone, a mission with no end date and no definition of what success looks like.

While the Prime Minister's announcement left many unanswered questions, Chief of the Defence Staff General Vance was clear. He said that there will be more risk to Canadian soldiers under this mission. He added:

You put more people on the ground in a dangerous place, and it is riskier overall.

Canadian troops will be in a conflict zone in a high threat environment and if they do come under attack, they will have to fight back. Here at home, the high number of veterans receiving disability benefits for PTSD is a reminder of the need for support services for our military.

On Sunday this past week four provinces honoured soldiers and veterans from Afghanistan, veterans who came home and committed suicide. We all have these stories in our communities. I have one at home, a family that I love very much in Ladysmith. A *Globe and Mail* study reports there are at least 62 soldiers who have taken their own lives following the Canadian mission in Afghanistan. That is a national tragedy.

The government promised, and I am delighted that it has, to reopen the nine veterans service offices closed by the Conservatives. It should also commit to increase mental health services.

No matter what happens with the debate in this House or what happens with the mission, the government must honour its commitments to veterans and those in service. These people are working to keep us safe and we must keep them safe as well.

Canadians voted for change and the new government will need to deliver that change. I believe Canada would have more credibility if it was looking after affairs in its own backyard, signing the Arms Trade Treaty, supporting de-radicalization efforts at home, and looking after our veterans as well as we possibly can.

I look forward to Canada cleaning up its act at home and restoring our reputation as a nation of peace and ethics.

• (1715)

Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the NDP's position strikes me as passingly strange. The New Democrats agree with the humanitarian mission that the government is proposing. They agree with the enhanced diplomatic mission that the government is proposing. They certainly agree with the welcoming of now close to 23,000 or 24,000 refugees into our country, which has been an amazing story and certainly a nation-building exercise.

However, the New Democrats want, somehow or another, some interception of the funds and the firearms that are going to ISIS to be done without involving the military. They want a military mission without the military. Whether it is combat or it is not combat, they simply want those interceptions to take place with respect to the oil, which are the funds; and the firearms, which are obviously what they are.

I am perplexed as to how the government could conduct interceptions of funding or firearms with no military presence?

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Madam Speaker, all of the suggestions that I have made and that my fellow New Democrats have made go toward the aim of decreasing the intensity of the fighting in the region, hopefully shortening the fighting in the region, and reducing the exposure of our men and women in service to danger when they are there. This is one of those examples of a stitch in time saves nine. We will never have enough weapons or enough fighters to force peace. However, if we choke-off the flow of weapons and finances, that has more to do with our banking system than it does with soldiers on the front line.

The United Nations Security Council has not invited our soldiers into the region, but has instead asked Canada, with its other NATO countries, to sign the Arms Trade Treaty. That fact is a very strong message about what the international community believes we should be doing to stop the intensity of fighting in the first place.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thought the member spoke very well. She certainly spoke about some things that we all agree are important: humanitarian assistance and addressing terrorist financing, although, of course, we might disagree on some of the details. However, what we are talking about here is the question of the military mission.

I see things perhaps differently from the member. She talked about her grandfather who was a pacifist during the war. I mentioned that I had family members who were victims of Nazi oppression, so I am very glad that we got involved and we fought that.

Does the member believe that genocide is happening? Does she believe in the principle of responsibility to protect, that it is legitimate to fight and use our military in cases where there is, in fact, a genocide going on?

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Madam Speaker, I believe Canada has a reputation to look after its complicity in some of these struggles and fights before anything else. I believe we would have more credibility on the international stage if we were able to give our partners around the world the assurance that we are committing to humanitarian efforts, and that we are supporting efforts for peace. We certainly have a strong tradition of standing up against genocide in many parts of the world in many historic battles. I am glad we have done that and I hope we will continue to do so.

However, we have to get the money and the weapons out of the fight, and we have to look after our veterans. If we did those three things first, we would have more credibility and we would arguably bring peace faster in this region.

Government Orders

• (1720)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to the House about one of the most important issues, and perhaps the most important one, that we can be called on to address as members of the House of Commons: the deployment of our soldiers and fellow citizens to foreign countries and sometimes to conflict situations.

First of all, I would like to thank the government for putting this question to the House and agreeing to consult it and eventually have a vote on this motion. I thank the government for this consideration.

This is an extremely important decision that should not be taken lightly. The pros and cons must be weighed carefully and, in this case, we must find the most constructive way to fight ISIL. Thus, after studying the proposal and the Conservatives' amendment, we have decided to vote against it, as a number of my colleagues mentioned.

Members should not assume that we take the atrocities committed by ISIL and the threat it poses lightly. The seriousness of this issue must not be downplayed. However, we must consider the best ways we and our allies can stop ISIL and the barbaric acts it is committing.

Canada must play a very important role, and the parties in the House will inevitably disagree on the best way to do that. We believe that we must first stop the flow of arms, the flow of money to ISIL and, above all, the foreign fighters who go to fight with ISIL. Canada has an important role to play in that regard.

In our own communities, we must also fight the radicalization that encourages Canadians to go abroad to fight with ISIL. That is important. If all countries focused their efforts on this issue, we could solve a big part of this problem because ISIL has many foreign fighters. It would be a more constructive way to address this issue.

This motion announced money for humanitarian assistance, but we think it would be better to focus on our strategy to fight ISIL so that we can help the people caught in the conflict. The NDP believes that it is very important to welcome refugees to Canada and provide them with a peaceful place to live their lives.

During the election campaign, the Prime Minister said a lot of things. He talked a lot about refugees, but he also talked about what the mission against ISIL would look like under a Liberal government. He said that he wanted to clarify the mission and draw a line between combat and non-combat missions.

However, in the motion before us today, the government's proposal is anything but clear on whether this is a combat or a non-combat mission. The Prime Minister is refusing to take a stand and is being vague about this mission.

Apparently we are going to paint targets for our allies' air strikes.

• (1725)

Apparently we will be refuelling planes that are carrying out the air strikes, while at the same time, we are withdrawing our CF-18s. This could be interpreted as an acknowledgement that air strikes are not the best strategy for Canada, although we are helping our allies carry out those air strikes. In this situation, the government's position

is not clear. Is the government for or against air strikes? It is withdrawing its own jets, but still helping its allies to continue conducting air strikes.

What is more, everyone knows that our soldiers are going to be in an extremely dangerous situation. Even the head of the Canadian Armed Forces has said that the level of danger will be higher because more Canadians will be deployed in Iraq and Syria. We are sending our soldiers into a dangerous situation.

Sadly, Sergeant Doiron died in very tragic circumstances. Obviously, if we increase the Canadian presence, the risks will also increase, and our soldiers could often find themselves in very high-risk situations, as has been the case in the past and we believe will also be the case in a mission like the one proposed here today. This will include having to return enemy fire, not to mention other extremely dangerous situations.

That is why it is important to weigh this mission carefully because this conflict we are sending our Canadian soldiers into is dangerous. We must not take this decision lightly.

I want to come back to what I was saying earlier about the foreign fighters who go there, including some from Canada. Deradicalization efforts need to be made and should be a significant part of Canada's strategy for the fight against ISIL.

Unfortunately, we are not hearing the government say anything about the fight against radicalization or a strategy to help identify these potential cases of radicalization before these young Canadians go abroad. Unfortunately it is often young people who are involved. There needs to be a strategy to put a stop to this as soon as possible. Unfortunately, this does not factor into what the government is saying right now. I would have liked this fight against radicalization to be part of the government's strategy.

However, we must commend the efforts being made in some communities, including Montreal for example. The Secretary-General of the United Nations recently visited Montreal and commended the efforts by the community to counter radicalization.

So far these efforts seem rather isolated in that they are being driven by communities, municipalities, and provinces. There do not seem to be any efforts being made nationally or by the federal government. I would have liked the government to put more emphasis on this in its strategy because in my view, it is very important in the fight against ISIL.

In this debate, we cannot forget the various conflicts that have broken out in this region, how Canada or our allies decided to intervene, and the impact these decisions had on these conflicts.

Government Orders

Too often, our strategy was to send our soldiers on missions that were poorly defined and had no end date. No one would tell us how the mission would be deemed successful, when we could withdraw our troops, and when we could say that the mission in question was over.

If we adopt this motion, and I sincerely hope that we do not, I think the government will repeat those same mistakes. I think it will continue in the same vein and the results will be much the same. If you are always doing the same thing, you cannot expect to get a different result.

I am disappointed in the government's approach. I would have expected a vastly different approach, one focused on deradicalization.

My time is up. I would be happy to take any questions from my colleagues.

● (1730)

[English]

Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will ask him the same question I asked his previous NDP colleague. To my mind, there is an inherent inconsistency in the NDP position. It wants the flow of funds cut off, it wants the flow of arms cut off, it wants the flow of trafficking of people cut off, but it wants no military involvement whatsoever. I do not see how that is possible.

It would be nice if we could all hold hands, link around the world and shut off all the funds through the interlocking banking system, but that will not happen. It would be nice if all the tankers coming out of the ISIL-held area of Iraq and going into Turkey could be stopped. It is not as if the military people do not know where the flow is coming from.

Therefore, could my hon. colleague, on behalf of his party, explain this inherent contradiction between asking for this cut-off of funds and firearms with no military involvement whatsoever?

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Madam Speaker, I do not see any contradiction at all in our party's position on this issue. It is a simple way to fight against ISIL. There are a number of ways of doing that. The arms trade is a good example. We see in the news right now how Canadian arms have unfortunately ended up in the wrong hands.

The first thing that we could do would be to sign the arms trade protocol and ensure that when our country sells weapons, they do not end up in the wrong hands. There are fairly simple measures that the government could take right away in this fight. I do not think that wanting to focus on that is a contradiction.

I think that limiting ISIL's funding and limiting the number of fighters who are going to the region to join ISIL's ranks are extremely effective ways of fighting this group. If we could limit the number of fighters going to that region, that would be ideal. That is an important aspect of the issue, and I talked about it in my speech.

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to ask the member about the immediate versus the long term. We have heard proposals from the

NDP and the Liberals about things we could do that would hopefully pay dividends over the long term. Certainly training and humanitarian assistance is important, but what we have right now, quite imminently, is serious violence against innocent people. We on this side of the House have called it genocide, as have many other human rights groups and people around the world.

I understand the long term, but what about those who are suffering and dying right now? What can we do for them immediately to stop the violence, besides a military response?

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

What we can do right now is welcome those who are in danger. Yes, our long-term objective is to eradicate, ideally as quickly as possible, the threat against the people in those regions.

One way to do that is to open our doors so that these people can find a haven here. We have some great examples of Syrians who have come to my community, Sherbrooke, to rebuild their lives. They are very happy now even though they were persecuted.

Our approach to welcoming refugees must focus on the people who are most at risk, who belong to religious minorities or even visible or sexual minorities.

We need to concentrate on that to ensure that the most at-risk people can escape as soon as possible and find a new homeland as quickly as possible.

● (1735)

[English]

Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Madam Speaker, just to get a formality out of the way up front, I will be splitting my time with the member for Kitchener—Conestoga.

I rise today to address the House regarding the government motion tabled on February 11, 2016. This motion seeks to gain the support of the House to redefine the mission in Syria and Iraq through the removal of our CF-18s from its sorties while increasing our training mission in Iraq.

Prior to continuing with my remarks, I would like to take the time to thank all of the men and women of the armed forces for their continuing effort to help those who have been made victims of this radical group of terrorists known as the Islamic state of Iraq and Syria. Furthermore, I would like to thank those who have served in the armed forces from all sides of the House in any capacity.

Canada's strategy to date has been one that has engaged in a multi-faceted and comprehensive approach, ranging from helping refugees gain resettlement, delivering aid to refugees in camps, training Kurdish troops, air strikes on key ISIS positions, and even stepping up to help defend Kurdish positions that are under intense attack. My colleagues have clearly and succinctly outlined the benefits that our CF-18s provided on the ground in Mosul to our ground troops, as well as the need to maintain those assets in the region.

Government Orders

The most succinct way to describe the government's actions on this motion is this. It is increasing the number of soldiers training forces for the front lines while reducing the capacity of our military to protect those same soldiers. While the increase in the number of troops would automatically increase the risk for Canadians, the government is further exacerbating that increased risk by removing assets available to support our troops and allies on the ground.

What I find most troubling on this matter is that the government fails to explain, after 1,378 sorties by CF-18s, destroying 399 targets, and 251 air strikes, what benefits our allies, Canadians, and our military gain by stepping back. The track record of the Royal Canadian Air Force speaks for itself. We have been deliberate and unwavering in our commitment to freeing the people of the region from tyranny and injustice, that is, until February 17, when the Prime Minister and his cabinet instructed the Royal Canadian Air Force to cease air strikes against ISIS. The government has failed to provide a reason, sensible rationale, or compelling argument as to the goals or objectives that they are trying to fulfill by stepping back from the fight against ISIS.

The reality is that we do not need the Prime Minister to stand in the House to tell us why. We already know. The Prime Minister made a campaign promise without military consultation, without discussion with our allies, without understanding the ramifications or consequences, without a single piece of sound planning. The Prime Minister wrote this foreign policy for political gain rather than effective government policy and then wonders why we are not invited to planning meetings with our allies on the war on ISIS.

When we properly assess the lack of rational arguments provided by the government, it is concerning. The fact that the government, led by a Liberal leader, can make structural change to a military mission based purely on political expedience is shameful, to say the least. At what point do members of the Liberal Party stand and say that this is wrong?

It is wrong to abdicate Canada's responsibility to stand up for those without a voice, it is wrong to leave our men and women on the ground with reduced capacity for reinforcements from the air, it is wrong for Canada to step back on the fight against radical terrorism, it is wrong for Canada to abandon the CF-18 mission against ISIL, it is wrong to make decisions that literally determine whether human beings live or die, live free or in bondage, live or flee in fear based on a campaign promise. I am tired of hearing words like "irresponsible", "naive", or "well intentioned" to describe the changes in this motion. The people I have spoken with say there is only one word to describe this motion, and that is "wrong".

I understand the Prime Minister wants to keep one of his 200 promises to the people of Canada. That makes sense to me. However, why not keep the promise to only go \$10 billion in deficit, to have tax changes that are revenue neutral, to be in surplus within four years, to run an open and transparent government, to restore the role and respect of parliamentarians in the House?

● (1740)

Why is it that the only promise the current government has to keep is the one that degrades our ability to help people in an utterly devastated region of the world? In doing so, it walks all over another promise that I just mentioned, that of restoring the role of members

of Parliament and operating with respect for parliamentarians. The members of this House are so unimportant to the government that it asked for approval not before ending the air strike mission but after.

I know that during the campaign and while in opposition, the Liberal leader spoke often regarding respect for Parliament. The Prime Minister went so far as to outline this in the very Speech from the Throne that was delivered just months ago. The Prime Minister stated, "In this Parliament, all members will be honoured, respected and heard, wherever they sit. For here, in these chambers, the voices of all Canadians matter."

On this motion our role was not honoured when the Prime Minister took this House for granted. We were not respected when being asked to approve a motion on an order that had already been made. We were certainly not heard prior to a decision on military conflict.

Here in these chambers only one voice, only one vote, only one perspective mattered, and it was not the voice of a Prime Minister but a leader campaigning to be one. The Prime Minister silenced this House by giving the order to cease operations in advance of the House speaking to his motion.

I am less concerned about the Prime Minister's 337 colleagues in this House than I am the 36 million people across this country who do not have a voice on a motion that literally deals with life and death. I am less concerned by the political gamesmanship practised by the government to stifle the ability of the opposition to give meaningful contributions to government than I am by the government's approach to stifle the voice of its citizens in this House.

The throne speech stated the following, "Let us not forget, however, that Canadians have been clear and unambiguous in their desire for real change. Canadians want their government to do different things, and to do things differently."

The government is fulfilling this part of the mandate within the throne speech with this motion. Not only is it doing different things by stepping back from the fight against ISIS, it is doing things differently too.

On March 24, 2015, the member for Calgary Heritage, then the Prime Minister of Canada, announced a government motion regarding the beginning of an air strike campaign against ISIS and Syria. This was an expansion of an existing air campaign that was solely operating in Iraq.

The decision was put to a vote on March 30, five days before the mission was expanded not five days after. The members of this House therefore stood for all Canadians and they had a say in the expansion of Canada's role prior to its initiation. This is an example of leadership. It is an example of respect for this House, of restoring honour to Parliament, and of giving Canadians a voice. That is a decision of a prime minister I am proud of.

I have one last quote from the throne speech, which I believe clearly applies to this debate, which is, "They want to be able to trust their government."

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This is true. The people of Canada want to trust that the things that its government are telling them are both true and advantageous for its citizens. However, to gain the trust of Canadians, the government must trust that Canadians and their representatives will make the right choice. The current government must allow people to speak through their elected officials and representatives in advance of ending the mission, not as an afterthought.

What insight has been neglected in this House? Which citizens' voices did the current government ignore? We as Canadians expect better from our government, especially when debating actions that will have a direct impact on the great men and women of our armed forces.

• (1745)

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for that contribution to the debate today. He was pleased to discuss the voices that are not heard in this House and how all members have to respect their ridings and the voices from the ridings.

I would like to know what this member has to say about the 58% of his riding who did not vote for him and voted for a party that believed in pulling the air strikes back from fighting ISIL.

Mr. Alexander Nuttall: Mr. Speaker, I really am shocked that we have a member on the other side of the House who did not come into this chamber to discuss the changes to a mission that are affecting real lives in a devastated part of the world. Instead he wants to play politics and relive October 19. The reality is that the people in the region are living a nightmare every day and instead the member wants to relive a date from over four months ago. Shame on you, sir.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Thank you. I would like to remind hon. members that they are speaking through the Speaker. I am not sure “shame on me” was quite appropriate, but I will convey it to the other member.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Sherbrooke.

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Albert Einstein once said that insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. I wonder if my colleague would agree.

Repeating the mistakes of the past and getting involved in a mission, as they are proposing here, that is very similar to other, past missions in the same region has not produced the results we would have expected, by which I mean peace in the region.

Does my colleague expect this mission to succeed or fail, if we basically engage in the same kind of mission as in the past?

[*English*]

Mr. Alexander Nuttall: Mr. Speaker, I apologize for shaming you before.

The reality is if the member is calling it madness that the Government of Canada would step in and help those who are incredibly vulnerable, try to be part of an answer to get people back in their homes in their homeland, then call me mad. I want to see a resolution.

The multi-faceted approach that we have taken in terms of providing aid, bringing Iraqi and Syrian refugees here to Canada, training troops on the ground, and definitely in terms of air strikes, is the right approach to continue with. Unfortunately, the government made a unilateral decision without coming to the House and applying for consent in order to do so.

Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I sometimes think I am in some sort of parallel reality here. For goodness' sake, the member talks about election and respect for Parliament. We have been debating this motion since last Wednesday. We had an election and the member's party ridiculed the then leader of the Liberal Party from one end of the country to the other about the position that he would take if he became Prime Minister. He then implements the position that he said he would do as a candidate and the hon. member says, oh, just blow off the people of Canada.

We had an election. We had the longest election in history. The position of the Liberal Party was well known. The position of the Conservative Party was well known. It was a change mission. It was a mandate to change the mission and yet the hon. member says we disrespect Parliament, members of Parliament, and the people of Canada because we are honouring the election promise that we made.

He carried on with his crazy rhetoric about stepping back when in fact we are stepping up. I do not know how we put more people in theatre rather than fewer and that is stepping back. I do not know how we make greater financial commitments and somehow that is stepping back. I do not know how we get 25,000 refugees here and that is just stepping back.

I would ask the hon. member to join reality.

Mr. Alexander Nuttall: Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the word “rhetoric” used by my colleague across the aisle. The reality is that the government did not respect the House of Commons. Liberals did not respect the people of Canada and their representatives in the House of Commons when they decided to cease the mission in advance of asking the House to give consent.

If the member believes that the result of the election gives them carte blanche going forward, then why are we even standing here?

• (1750)

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the utmost respect for and am forever thankful to the men and women who have served, who are serving, and who will serve in the Canadian Armed Forces, and I am glad to extend that respect and gratitude to many of my colleagues who have served in uniform and now serve here in this chamber.

While I personally do not have military experience, I rise in the House today on behalf of the constituents who placed their trust in me to share their views and to advocate for their expectations of the government.

Government Orders

I was glad to hear that the current government would follow the precedent set out by our Conservative government by allowing a fulsome debate on the mission at hand and to hold a vote in Parliament. However, I was extremely disappointed by the lack of transparency and accountability that the current government has shown by bringing our CF-18s home and parking them before this debate is finished and before we have even hold a vote. Surely the government knows better than to try to deliberately mislead Canadians and parliamentarians, or at least so I had hoped.

My constituents, and indeed all Canadians, deserve better from the Prime Minister. What has not been made clear on the government side is why the Liberal government has unilaterally, in opposition to the vast majority of Canadians, decided to pull our CF-18s out of the fight against ISIS.

In response to my remarks, the Liberal government will say that the Conservative Party does not understand that we are part of a coalition. We absolutely do understand that we are part of a coalition. The difference on this side of the House is that we think it is irresponsible to leave the heavy lifting to our allies.

Our pilots are among the most skilled in the world. They are the best of the best. Our allies have specifically requested that they continue. In a radio interview just last month, the Minister of National Defence confirmed quite succinctly exactly how our allies feel about Canada's role when he said, "Of course they want to keep our CF-18s there".

Since 2014, these pilots have carried out over 1,300 sorties, almost 800 support aircraft flights, and have destroyed almost 400 ISIS targets. Our brave pilots who carried out these vital missions safeguarded countless innocent and vulnerable people on the ground from the advances of barbarism. That was their contribution. That is the truth. To suggest otherwise undermines these efforts and brings dishonour to our men and women who wear our uniform so proudly.

Unfortunately, we have been given a false choice by the Liberal government. We can either have training and humanitarian assistance or air strikes, but this is not reality. This is not an either/or situation. It is a both/and situation. Let us not forget that we have been doing all of these things since the mission begun. We have had humanitarian support on the ground. We have had training for the local military and police forces and have had our CF-18s in theatre.

If this were simply a question of increasing training for local forces and increasing humanitarian and diplomatic initiatives without changing our air strike contributions, I am sure that there would be unanimous consent from this side of the House. However, the Liberal government has made us choose between either increasing our training mission, humanitarian assistance, and diplomatic ties, or remaining an ally in good standing by remaining in the combat mission with air strikes.

Unfortunately, as I said, the Liberal government has not just made us choose, it has already decided for us. Why? We do not know why. Is it because the Liberal Party of Canada has adopted a non-combat mantra within its top ranks? Is it because it is looking for ways to save money in order to minimize its ballooning deficit and clear economic mismanagement? Does the Prime Minister just personally disagree with air strikes? We have no idea, because the Liberal

government, after a full week of debate, has not given us a single reason why we have brought our CF-18s home and taken the greatest pilots in the world out of the fight. The Liberal government has not given us one reason.

We have taken these pilots out of the fight while leaving their brothers in arms on the ground without Canadian aircraft support. Sure, they can now rely on our coalition partners for cover, but Canadians are Canadians are Canadians and we want what is absolutely best for Canadian men and women on the ground, and the best is having our CF-18s overhead.

● (1755)

This is Canada's fight. We have an obligation to stand up for the victims of genocide, to fight against this evil and destructive ideology, and to protect Canadians at home and abroad.

If only our current Prime Minister had the same courage the U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron has shown. He understands how a coalition best works together, and it is definitely not by handing over all the hard work to other countries. Mr. Cameron is quoted as saying, "We shouldn't be content with outsourcing our security to our allies. If we believe that action can help protect us, then with our allies, we should be part of that action, not standing aside from it."

Professor Hansen, Director of the Centre for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies, Munk School of Global Affairs, put it best when he said, "There's nothing admirable in letting other countries do the fighting while you hide behind liberal pieties."

The United Nations Security Council has determined that the Islamic State constitutes an "unprecedented" threat to international peace and security, calling upon member states with the requisite capacity to take "all necessary measures" to prevent and suppress its terrorist acts on territory under its control in Syria and Iraq.

We are a member state. We have the requisite capacity. Why are we not taking all necessary steps or measures? Canada has a long, proud history of defending innocent and vulnerable populations by taking on those who commit mass atrocities.

However, this is not just a war that is being waged overseas, out of sight, out of mind. ISIS has declared war on Canada and our allies. It is paramount that the government stands shoulder to shoulder with our allies to defend and protect the safety and security of Canadians both here and abroad. Every single one of us and our constituents would prefer a world where military and police were not needed, but we do not live in a perfect world. Evil exists and Canada has an obligation to restrain that evil.

I have had the great privilege of visiting the monumental historic sites of Juno Beach and Vimy. I encourage all members to take the time to visit these sites. These sites exist because Canadians did not shy away from combat. They did not rely solely on their allies. They exist because Canadians rose to the occasion; our brave men and women fought side by side with our allies and defeated the evil of their time.

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We need to do the same today. We need to do all that we can to bring peace and stability in the area. We owe it to the refugees whom we are welcoming here in Canada, and we owe it to their families who are still living under the brutal Islamic State regime back home.

Public opinion was very important to the Liberal Party during the campaign season, so why now, since it has seized the brass ring, is it deaf to the voices of Canadians? Why is this ill-conceived election promise any more important than the laundry list of election promises already broken?

It is with the support of my constituents, Canadian citizens, and our allies that I stand in the House today speaking against the government motion and urging the government to allow our CF-18s back in the fight, to reintroduce the greatest pilots in the world back into theatre and take all necessary measures to degrade and destroy ISIS.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pose the following to my hon. colleague, that there might be another way of looking at this. I attended the Royal Military College in Kingston. One of the key courses we had to take was military and strategic studies. As part of that, we had to look at strategy and tactics for all different kinds of engagements to understand when one needed to go in with a certain strategy, but more importantly, when to understand that that strategy needed to change with the changing conditions of the particular conflict.

Is this not one of those occasions where we must change strategy? Does it make our contribution any less valuable, simply because we may not have fighter pilots? There are 25,000 other men and women in uniform who serve in meaningful roles each and every day in our Canadian Forces, and this new mission will allow us to bring a different level of strength and capacity to this mission. It will be as effective, if not more so, than it has been in the past.

• (1800)

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the question, but I was very clear in my remarks that if we were voting on simply expanding the humanitarian, security, and intelligence aspects of the mission, on this side of the House, I am confident that we would have unanimous support for that kind of mission.

However, there is no rationale for removing the CF-18s, and if there is, we have not heard it. We have been here a week debating the motion, and not one Liberal member has been able to explain how removing the CF-18s out of theatre enhances our ability to degrade and destroy ISIL.

We do not question the aspect of increasing our forces on the ground, but why, at a time when we are increasing the number of Canadian men and women on the ground, would we subject them to the potential of having no overhead protection?

We know the challenges of communications. We saw it here on October 22 with the different security forces in the House. The challenge of communicating between different security forces at a time of emergency like this is challenging. Therefore, there is no question in my mind that our men and women on the ground would be much safer if they had the cover of our CF-18s flying overhead.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, our position is that Canada should be intervening by cutting off the flow of money, foreign fighters, and arms to ISIS. The new government has done nothing in those three areas, which would actually have a preponderant effect in hurting ISIS.

During the campaign, Canadians debated this issue. The Liberals at the time said that they would do the same thing as the NDP: scale back the mission, and look at cutting off funds and arms. Now the government has come out with a completely different message just weeks after the election and, in fact, is expanding the combat mission with hundreds of new soldiers.

I have asked this question of other Conservative members, and I think Canadians do need a clear answer. There is a motion before us that would expand the combat mission and send hundreds of new soldiers into the combat situation. Does the member support that or not?

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Mr. Speaker, I think we see clearly the difference between the three parties in the House. Unfortunately, my biggest disagreement is with the party that my colleague represents.

If there ever were a fight in which we ought to defend vulnerable and innocent people, if there ever were a fight where we needed to be involved, this is it.

As I said in my remarks, I had the privilege of visiting Juno Beach for the 65th anniversary of D-Day. I will never forget how the people of France, to this day, are grateful that we did not have a government that stood on the sidelines and hoped to just cut off money supplies, but was actually willing to send men and women into the field to protect innocent people.

When the veterans stood from their wheelchairs and took a few steps across a little gravel pathway to lay a wreath at the cenotaph, children of parents who had been there on D-Day would run in, pick up a stone that had touched the sole of the foot of one of our soldiers, and take it as a memento. They are so grateful for what our men and women in uniform did back then.

I am convinced that 20 or 50 years from now, if we do the right thing, we will be able to stand tall and be thankful that our men and women stood in support, not only of our troops here at home, but in support of men and women who are vulnerable and innocent and are being treated in unbelievable ways.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the member for Beloeil—Chambly.

Since 2011, 270,000 people have been killed because of the war in Syria. To give people an idea of what that represents, that would be like wiping out the entire population of four RCMs in my region, from Vaudreuil-Dorion to Hemmingford, Valleyfield, and Orms-town.

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The victims include men, women, children, and seniors, people who may have carried a weapon or simply their clothes as they fled the bombings and the atrocities committed by ISIL. There are also 4.5 million refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Europe. That is comparable to all the residents south of an imaginary line running from Mirabel to Lac-Mégantic having to leave Quebec to seek refuge in Ontario, New York State, Vermont, New Hampshire, or Maine. It is one of the largest human displacements in recent history.

For the past two years, the Canadian government has responded with relatively meagre humanitarian assistance and increased military involvement, as it has sent in fighter jets and several dozen trainers.

Today, the Liberal government has moved a motion that talks about withdrawing the CF-18s and tripling the number of Canadian special forces members, an advise and assist mission coupled with a combat mission, including target painting for air strikes. Humanitarian assistance is increased to \$840 million over the next three years.

Unfortunately, the Liberal government, like the Conservatives, believes that increasing our military contribution will help resolve the conflict in that region and allow us to defeat ISIL.

It feels as though we have not learned our lesson from the mistakes made during the war in Afghanistan. First, the parameters of the mission are very vague. The Liberals criticized the Conservatives for that and now the Liberals are doing exactly the same thing. Neither the Prime Minister nor the Minister of National Defence has provided any details as to what defines a successful Canadian mission. No exit strategy has been presented.

Will the troops stay until ISIL has been defeated? If so, does the government realize that one shot cannot kill an ideology in two years?

The government is giving itself two years before again bringing this issue before the House for debate. I would remind members that this is not a NATO or a UN mission. It is completely unacceptable for the Liberals to ask us for a blank cheque. Even the Conservatives had a debate in the House after six months and then a year.

This is about the lives of our soldiers. Every day, there are more lives at risk in the region. In the meantime, Canada will provide arms and munitions to the Kurds and perhaps to the Iraqi army.

A series of questions come to mind. Which Kurdish group will we give arms to? Will we give arms only to the Iraqi Kurds or to the Syrian Kurds as well? What will happen if Canadian arms are used against Turkish soldiers? What guarantees can the government give us that our arms will not be used to violate human rights?

These are important questions because we have seen in the news recently how a weapon built by a Manitoban company that was sold to Saudi Arabia ended up in the hands of a fighter in the Yemeni civil war. The arms trade is a key component of the war in Syria and Iraq. Every ally provides the side it has chosen with arms and munitions, with very little thought to civilian casualties. The motion does not address this issue at all.

Academics have looked into how to resolve the conflict in Syria. The Observatory on Radicalization and Violent Extremism in Quebec published an article on its website that proposes several

solutions. Here are some of the main actions it suggests: link oil revenue to local development, stop adding arms to the conflict, cut off ISIL's oil revenue, push local stakeholders to impose peace in their area, provide logistical and financial support to countries with refugee camps, and cut off tribal and public support for ISIL.

I do not see many connections between the action being taken by the Liberal government and the solutions proposed by experts on the geopolitical situation in the Middle East.

There is something else. I am thinking about proposals at the national level and measures to counter ISIL's messaging in cyberspace, on the Internet. There is nothing at all about that, even though I believe that action desperately needs to be taken in that regard.

As the NDP critic for youth, I find this extremely irresponsible of the government.

● (1805)

By taking military action, we are simply reinforcing the terrorists' ideology and giving them more reasons to recruit young people who feel excluded from western societies. I do not see a single measure in the motion to help us understand the causes of terrorism or learn how to prevent radicalization and keep young Canadians from going to Syria or Iraq to join ISIL. These young men and women feel excluded from our society because they do not have jobs or are subject to racism. They feel excluded and rejected. They are subject to discrimination, among other things.

The terrorist group capitalizes on these feelings of isolation and vulnerability. It attracts these young people with visions of an ideal society in which young people have a role to play. These young people slowly disconnect from our societies and their social networks and spread ISIL's slick and misleading messages.

What is the government doing to counter this? I do not see a single measure in this motion.

ISIL propaganda is dangerous and destructive. Al-Qaeda was responsible for the September 11, 2001, tragedy, and that group has the same backward ideology as ISIL. According to the Observatory on Radicalization and Violent Extremism, ISIL is a kind of al-Qaeda 2.0 because it is even more adept at manipulating social media and messaging and it is better at attracting people. That is why we need to figure out how to tackle ISIL's ideology and messaging just like we need to figure out how to deal with the problem of youth radicalization.

I have not heard anyone in this debate talk about what we can do about cyberspace. Young people between the ages of 15 and 35, people around my age, get a lot of information from the Internet, through social media and websites. It is pretty easy to find ISIL propaganda, as many reports have shown. I am not talking about censorship or trying to prevent ISIL from being on the Internet, because that would be impossible.

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However, we need to provide tools to ensure that our young people resist extremist rhetoric. Once again, the motion does not provide any tools to combat ISIL's toxic, regressive and violent ideology, which is flourishing on the web. While we may be having some problems with our youth now, imagine what is going on in the minds of teenagers who have suffered barrel bomb attacks by the Syrian army or physical or psychological torture at the hands of jihadists. Young Syrians who are in refugee camps or trying to cross the Mediterranean will have no hope if the conflict does not find a political solution and if we do not provide any assistance in that regard, especially neutral humanitarian assistance.

Once again, this is not covered. The motion does not place any emphasis on neutral humanitarian assistance. By linking humanitarian assistance with military action, as the Conservatives did in the past, the Liberal government is tainting its assistance and making it harder for our humanitarian organizations to do their work. We are talking about children, teens, and young adults who have been traumatized and have very limited access to basic services like running water, electricity, schooling, and health care.

In closing, I would say that continuing to add weapons only reinforces ISIL's messaging. It thinks this is a war of civilization between Muslims and the west. The best proof that this is absolutely not the case is the fact that currently in Canada, Muslims, Christians, and atheists, regardless of the colour of their skin or their origin, live side by side.

A number of experts have said that more bombing is not going to contain ISIL. On the contrary, the bombings have caused ISIL troops to disperse and find shelter in civilian homes and on their lands. This makes it even easier for them to recruit new soldiers.

What the NDP is proposing and has always proposed for fighting ISIL is not to get involved in a combat mission, but to disrupt the arms trade, the flow of money, and the influx of foreign fighters, in addition to enhancing deradicalization efforts here in Canada.

I will close by quoting United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon:

Over the longer-term, the biggest threat to terrorists is not the power of missiles—it is the politics of inclusion.

●(1810)

[*English*]

Mr. Colin Fraser (West Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on one thing the member mentioned. She said that she did not see any measures in our motion to prevent radicalization. I would like to draw her attention, in particular, to clause (b) of the motion, which states, “improving the living conditions of conflict-affected populations and helping to build the foundations for long-term regional stability of host communities, including Lebanon and Jordan”.

Would she agree with me that it is important to have regional stability and that this part of the motion, in particular, will help stop the spread of violent extremism by providing stabilization to a region that is certainly in conflict and whose people are becoming refugees, which feeds into radicalization? In my opinion this motion will help address that problem. Would she agree with me on that?

●(1815)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach: Mr. Speaker, what the Liberals are proposing is to continue to extend the combat mission, and the NDP does not believe that this will have a stabilizing effect on the current war in the Middle East.

The Liberals are proposing to triple the number of soldiers in ISIL territory, but they have no idea what the definition of combat is. In fact, today, during question period, the Prime Minister talked about a combat mission. Yesterday, the government said it was not a combat mission. Everything is vague. We have no idea what the criteria for a successful mission are.

How can the member talk about stability when a number of parameters are still very hazy and vague and we are not getting any answers? We do not know when the mission will end. We do not know the criteria for a successful mission. We do not know when we will see these soldiers again, and we also do not know the budget for this combat mission, or advise mission, as the Liberals like to call it.

[*English*]

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments by the member opposite, but I am troubled with one factor. The government has announced that, yes, it is pulling out the CF-18s. That was a campaign promise, and it has lived up to that. However, one thing that was not mentioned was that it was tripling the size of our men and women on the ground, putting them in harm's way. The Prime Minister said that, yes, they would be in riskier situations.

How would the hon. member deliver a message to a mother, a father, a sister or brother, or the children of one of those men and women should someone lose a life because we pulled out one of our core strategic military pieces to protect them?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach: Mr. Speaker, everyone here agrees that the devastation ISIL is wreaking is disastrous, as is the devastation wrought in any war. War crimes are being committed. What we are talking about is the best way to intervene so that ISIL is cut off from all of the resources it is using to wage war and wreak havoc.

For a long time now, the NDP has been proposing that any flow of money that could be used to fund terrorist wars be stemmed. We also want to reduce the arms trade. Canada has not yet signed the Arms Trade Treaty. We want to work on deradicalization to prevent our young people from being recruited by ISIL, and obviously we want to work on humanitarian aid.

Researchers, experts and even the people at the UN are discussing all of these avenues, these tools. They are saying that these are the most effective ways of thwarting ISIL. That is how the NDP wants to work. We do not want to continue to send our soldiers to the front to be killed.

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Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to rise in the House today, even if it is to speak about such a complex and troubling issue. We must admit that these are very complicated and ongoing geopolitical situations. This violence has existed, in different forms, for many years now.

I think it is important to point out that what we are talking about today is the role that Canada should play. When we talk about the fight against the so-called Islamic State, we often talk about all of the efforts being made. However, our responsibility as parliamentarians is to focus on what we can do better and determine how we can better contribute to the efforts being made in the region.

Before I get into the questions that we have for the government and the solutions that the NDP is proposing, I would like to point out two very important things. The first is that no matter where we come from or what party we belong to, we all support the men and women in our Canadian Armed Forces 100%, before, during and after any missions they participate in. That is very important.

No matter where we come from or what party we belong to, we are all disgusted by the atrocities being committed by the so-called Islamic State. Videos of the atrocities circulate online and cause us to all feel the same horror and indignation. That is also important to note.

Where we unfortunately disagree is on how to proceed, but the two points I mentioned are very important, and I think they should not unfairly taint the debate.

I will start by talking about the questions we have for the government about what is in the motion. Many of our questions show that, unfortunately, history is repeating itself. I am very proud to be a member of the New Democratic Party of Canada, a political party that, in the past 15 years, has been there to ask questions about topics such as our intervention in Afghanistan.

These questions were difficult and unfortunately generated some nastiness. Jack Layton was called Taliban Jack in the House of Commons. Why? Because he dared to ask questions about the length of the mission, the parameters and conditions of victory, and our specific objectives. The ideas were laudable, but unfortunately, we cannot ask the women and men of the Canadian Armed Forces to go overseas to defend and accomplish a military mission simply on the basis of ideas. There must be clear objectives. We are asking them to put their lives in danger, so we must ask ourselves these questions.

I remember reading an article in *La Presse* a few years ago that described the lamentable state of a school in Afghanistan. There was no stairway to the second floor of the school. Schools were falling apart, the very schools that we were supposed to protect and help rebuild. That mission lasted over 10 years and cost many Canadian lives. We did some good, but we did not achieve the objectives we set out to achieve, vague as they were, to a degree that we, as parliamentarians, and the Canadian people deemed satisfactory, not to mention the men and women who gave so much in their attempts to accomplish something in those chaotic regions.

So here we are asking the same questions today. What exactly is the government's objective? How will it define success? How much time should we expect this to take?

As my colleague from Salaberry—Suroît just pointed out in her speech, at least the Conservatives had a timeline in the motions they moved in the previous Parliament. They came back to the House every six to 12 months to discuss the mission again with a new motion. In this case, the government moved a motion even though it had already started changing the parameters of the mission without even consulting parliamentarians, and its answers in question period leave a lot to be desired.

We will therefore continue to ask these questions because the answers have been unsatisfactory so far. This is very troubling. That is one reason why we oppose this motion.

Here is another question we would like to ask the government: is this a combat mission, yes or no?

• (1820)

The Liberals here in the House, in this very place where I stand today, asked a number of questions and voted against a Conservative motion, because they said they did not want to support a combat mission. During the election campaign, they also promised to end the combat mission.

Even though the government is withdrawing our CF-18s today, it is putting more men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces in danger, without being able to say why or whether this is actually a combat mission or not. We have gotten no answers on this.

Furthermore, in one of his answers today, the Prime Minister used the term “combat mission”. He finally realized that perhaps he called it what it really is. Then he backpedalled and started talking again about the fight against ISIL. We know, however, from comments made by the Minister of National Defence and the Prime Minister that the government recognizes that this is a combat mission, even though it does not want to call it that. Let us tell it like it is. That would be a good place to start.

We are raising all these questions, but what is the NDP proposing? Since we do not support this government's or the previous government's approach, we should at least come up with our own proposal and possible solutions. How does the NDP think Canada should contribute to this very dangerous and very important situation in the Middle East, specifically in Iraq?

Before we even go to the region, we need to examine what we are doing here at home. Efforts to combat radicalization and extremism are crucial. That begins here, because after all, we have heard many stories, including some about young people who are going overseas to fight with those terrorist groups. I am grateful that my colleague addressed this issue in her speech.

Government Orders

It is crucial that we take action here at home. Unfortunately, the previous government did not do so, despite Bill C-51, and the current government does not seem ready to do so either.

We are seeing some extraordinary efforts being made, in Montreal for example, and it is quite commendable. However, it is not just up to local authorities to do this work. We expect leadership from the federal government. We expect it to work with religious, local, and police authorities to ensure that young people are not influenced by ISIL's propaganda. This would reduce the number of fighters contributing to the violence in these regions. That is extremely important.

Unfortunately, despite good intentions and fine speeches, there is still no tangible plan to address radicalization here at home. That is what the NDP would like to see.

There are two other important aspects: money and weapons. As far as weapons are concerned, the solution is so simple. The government just has to sign a treaty that was negotiated, but that the Conservatives did not sign. The Liberal government says it wants to sign the treaty, but it has yet to do so.

In the past few days, during this debate, I heard one of the parliamentary secretaries say that the Minister of Foreign Affairs was seized of the matter. If so, I do not believe he sees the urgency because it would be so easy to resolve this problem.

The government already indicated that it intends to sign this treaty, so it should do so. The government should sign it and then we can start doing what we must in order to reduce the influx of arms in the region.

This is especially troubling, as my colleague from Salaberry—Suroît and several of my other colleagues pointed out in their speeches, because we know that some of these weapons originated in Canada.

We are asking for more than just transparency. We are asking the government to take real action to ensure that we stop the flow of weapons in this region. We must reduce the influx and take action in true Canadian fashion. In other words, we need to work with our international partners to reduce the arms trade.

With respect to money, we can conduct negotiations together with our allies, the United Nations and other stakeholders and authorities to ensure that we cut off funding for these groups.

This week, we learned that ISIL sustained a serious financial setback. It had such an impact that it reduced ISIL's ability to commit terrible and violent acts in the region. Money is crucial.

Let us continue our efforts. That is the type of role that Canada can have and the one envisaged by the NDP. Unfortunately, that does not seem to be what the Liberal government plans on doing. For that reason, we are going to oppose the motion.

We will continue to ask questions and make specific proposals concerning the positive role that Canada can have.

• (1830)

[English]

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great concentration to the comments made by the member opposite. I agree that the signing of the treaties will bring even more pressure to bear on the situation. It needs to be done as soon as possible, and I share his sense of urgency on that issue.

However, I also heard the member say that the mission we are debating here, which is not a combat mission but a training and intelligence mission and support for stabilizing the region, is being presented as a *fait accompli* without being debated in Parliament. Is that not what we are doing right now, debating that change and debating the nature of that change? Is that not the motion that is on the table in front of Parliament? Is that not the decision we are making?

The second question I would like addressed is this. I have heard from the NDP several times now the call for deradicalization, not just in relation to this mission but also in relation to Bill C-51 and other issues that seek to provide security for Canadians. We share that commitment to trying to bring those programs to bear. Beyond talking to religious groups, to community centres, and to mayors, what precise steps on deradicalization would the New Democrats see as appropriate and effective and would suggest to us to pursue as government policy?

[Translation]

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that my colleague shares our sense of urgency about the treaty. I hope he will share his feelings with the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

When the Minister of National Defence and the Prime Minister talk about the mission, it sometimes seems as though they consider it to be a combat mission. This uncertainty is extremely worrisome, especially when we recall the Afghanistan mission. We cannot support this mission without clear parameters and conditions of victory.

We need to have clear, specific parameters when we are asking our women and men of the Canadian Armed Forces to put their lives in danger in these regions for such missions. However, the government has not given us any parameters.

My colleague asked a very good question about deradicalization. I would be lying if I claimed to have all the answers about program specifics. However, that is a good reason for the government to support a study by the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, with a view to inviting stakeholders who can answer these questions, working with local authorities such as those in Montreal, and looking at what has worked and not worked to deradicalize young people.

We must also work with young people, especially on mental health issues. My colleague from Salaberry—Suroît spoke about how joblessness and racism can exacerbate this problem. We must find solutions.

My colleague asked a very good question. We would love to examine the issue with the government members.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the best deradicalization program we could have would be to get rid of ISIS. That would prevent a lot of radicalization, because many people respond to the promise of a supposed and imagined caliphate.

I want to ask if the member believes that genocide is happening in Syria and Iraq. Is he willing to call what is happening a genocide? Does he believe in the principle of responsibility to protect?

[Translation]

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, we are talking about deradicalization.

The Conservatives think that dropping bombs is the best deradicalization program. However, we should be working with local authorities and religious communities. When the Conservatives were in power they did not do anything in that respect. We had to wait for the municipalities to start taking action.

Canada has a lot of work to do in that respect. People from Canada are going abroad and fighting for ISIL.

With regard to the other part of his question, as I said at the beginning of my speech, we need to stop talking about the atrocities committed by ISIL. We all agree that ISIL is committing atrocities, that we are all disgusted by them, and that this organization must be wiped off the face of the earth. That is not the right way to say it, but we no longer want to see such acts of violence. That is exactly why we need to do this work.

When we talk about a responsibility to protect, we are talking about the United Nations. Their position on this is in line with what the NDP is proposing. We are talking about the principles of the United Nations, so let us work with the UN so that Canada can do what it is best suited to do in Iraq and put an end to this violence.

• (1835)

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speeches and thus wanted to speak to this issue this evening, practically at the end of the debate. I will humbly seek to suggest a compromise.

When it comes to defence and foreign affairs, it is best to be prudent. We have to be able to adapt to problems that are changing and becoming very complex. I do not want to blame the new Prime Minister, who was excited about winning the election on October 19. However, it seems to me that he was somewhat careless when he said the next day that he would withdraw the fighter jets. The jets protected the troops on the ground and at times made it possible to open up humanitarian corridors. He suddenly declared that this was all being withdrawn. There is a way to put things right and to consider that this happened well before many other events that I will talk about shortly.

First of all, I will say that the Bloc Québécois is a pacifist party that has always believed that humanitarian missions could be conducted under the auspices of NATO. The Bloc was open to NATO's peace talks. It has always favoured multilateralism. If one analyzes this complex conflict with an appropriate degree of pragmatism, it becomes clear that the bombings in support of

humanitarian efforts on the ground were considered appropriate measures. That was during the election campaign. What happened afterwards?

All the members in this place have read the UN Security Council resolution adopted in November. However, for the benefit of those following our debate who may not be familiar with the resolution, it is important to quote some parts of the UN Security Council resolution of last November. In fact, we heard the call of the UN, which stated:

Reaffirming the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming its respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and unity of all States in accordance with purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter,

Reaffirming that terrorism in all forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security and that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable regardless of their motivations, whenever and by whomsoever committed,

Determining that, by its violent extremist ideology, its terrorist acts, its continued gross systematic and widespread attacks directed against civilians, abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, including those driven on religious or ethnic ground, its eradication of cultural heritage and trafficking of cultural property, but also its control over significant parts and natural resources across Iraq and Syria and its recruitment and training of foreign terrorist fighters whose threat affects all regions and Member States, even those far from conflict zones, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant...constitutes a global and unprecedented threat to international peace and security,

...

Determined to combat by all means this unprecedented threat to international peace and security,

...

Reaffirming that Member States must ensure that any measures taken to combat terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law,...

Reiterating that the situation will continue to deteriorate further in the absence of a political solution to the Syria conflict and emphasizing the need to implement the Geneva communiqué...

1. *Unequivocally condemns* [and this is where I want to mention what has happened since October 19] in the strongest terms the horrifying terrorist attacks perpetrated by ISIL also known as Da'esh which took place on 26 June 2015 in Sousse, on 10 October 2015 in Ankara, on 31 October 2015 over Sinaï, on 12 November 2015 in Beirut and on 13 November 2015 in Paris, and all other attacks...

...

5. *Calls upon* Member States that have the capacity to do so to take all necessary measures...to redouble and coordinate their efforts to prevent and suppress terrorist acts committed specifically by ISIL also known as Da'esh...

• (1840)

The day after the election, when the Prime Minister thought he was doing the right thing by outlining how he was going to keep his election promise with all his political resolve, he ended up carelessly painting himself into a corner. Then the Paris attacks happened and barely a weekend or two ago there was the bomb attack carried out by the Kurds, the very people to whom this government wants to send soldiers. The government is not changing course, but just yesterday morning my colleague said that it would be easy to do so.

Government Orders

The Bloc Québécois agrees with a number of aspects of the motion on Canada's contribution to the efforts against ISIL. As far as the mission statement is concerned, there are many things we agree with, but there is a problem. Beyond the rhetorical debates over whether this is a combat mission or not, and beyond the debates on semantics, after we establish what is really happening in the theatre of operations, what do we do to heed the call of the UN? What do we do, for example, after we have learned, just on February 11, that the 28 NATO countries that are already individually involved in the fight against ISIL now want to join the coalition?

I think we need to follow suit, but following suit does not mean being arrogant and saying that an election promise was made and must be kept. Eventually, the government will have to revisit its plan if it is sending three times the number of soldiers to a theatre of operations where they will be in danger. I do not know who would want to go paint targets on the ground. I do not suppose people are painting targets on the ground in the kitchen out back. It is in a risky theatre of operations. When people are doing that, they are very close to danger whether we call it a combat mission or a support mission.

As my colleague said, the description of the mission is not clear on whether this is training or operational mentoring. If it is just training, even if it is in theatre, that is not the same thing as advising troops on the ground who are advancing and who are in danger of attack.

● (1845)

How many will be in a group, and who will ensure their security? The big question is who will ensure the security of our troops while they are engaged in operational mentoring.

In our view, given this aspect of the mission, asking to keep a reasonable number of CF-18s available seems like a fair compromise. I would remind the House that some Quebeckers believe that national defence and foreign policy are up to Canada alone. However, one-third of the soldiers sent overseas will be Quebec residents, and we are paying for one-quarter of the mission. Any time we send troops into the field, the absolute minimum we must do is to ensure increased security.

Yesterday my colleague suggested that perhaps it would be private firms, mercenaries, or Iraqi forces, who still need training, who will defend and provide security for our troops on the ground. I do not believe that anyone answered the following question: how will security be coordinated within the coalition to ensure that our troops are really being covered during operational mentoring? I think it would have been quite prudent to keep our planes close by, to support our troops, as we did in Ukraine, where there are six CF-18s doing nothing.

That is the compromise the Bloc Québécois is proposing to the House. To those looking for a perfect mission statement here today I would say that we have a mission statement that is going to change in time. What I am saying is that its imperfection must not have a direct impact on the lives of those we are sending into the field. There is a way to reach consensus. So far we get the impression that the mission statement is enough and fairly complete in the government's eyes. It is not very open to some of the amendments proposed by the opposition parties. I would remind the government

that even though it has a majority, it was still elected by a minority of voters.

In a parliamentary democracy like ours, when it comes to something as important as this mission statement, as intervening in very risky theatres of operation, then the government has to listen to all the opposition parties. In that sense I think the Conservatives could get behind the Bloc Québécois' position and the compromise it is proposing.

For my NDP colleagues, whom I quite like, I think that the deradicalization centre that was quickly set up in Montreal and admired by Ban Ki-moon, is very important for our young people here at home, as the hon. NDP member said so eloquently in her speech. There are field activities we can do at home and field activities we can do abroad.

● (1850)

When we send our soldiers into a theatre of operations, I imagine that there are not too many people looking for training on human rights. I do not think that deradicalization training would be appropriate either.

At some point, after all of the rhetoric and theatrics, we need to stop being theoretical and start being practical. I urge all parties to be practical and to unite behind a mission statement, which, in my view, needs a bigger consensus than we have right now.

For completely different reasons, which we sometimes partly share with the other opposition parties, the opposition will vote against this mission statement, and the government, with its majority, will pat itself on the back. I think we should try to find a minimum compromise to bring people together on this issue.

In closing, I remind members that human lives are at stake here, and that is why I am calling on parliamentarians in the House to find a compromise.

[English]

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague has obviously put a lot of thought into what is really a critically important mission not only for Canada but for the world.

Earlier in his comments he made mention of a number of factors that were relied upon, investigated, and referred to in the notes to United Nations Security Council resolution 2249 from last year that came out around November 20. In relation to that, I will read a small amount of the fifth part of the resolution, which states:

Calls upon Member States that have the capacity to do so to take all necessary measures, in compliance with international law, in particular with the United Nations Charter, as well as international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law, on the territory under the control of ISIL also known as Da'esh...to redouble and coordinate their efforts to prevent and suppress terrorist acts...

In light of this, the position the government is putting forward in refocusing our efforts really goes to the heart of what the United Nations Security Council has recommended that nations involved in the coalition fighting Daesh do.

Government Orders

Even if the member will not support the motion at this time for the reasons that he gave, would he at least agree with the government that the plan put forward to focus efforts on intelligence gathering, humanitarian aid, and capacity-building for the forces on the ground is far superior to that of the Conservatives, which focused on the CF-18s and lacked those other aspects that were so critical and were requested by the United Nations Security Council in November?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I agree with humanitarian assistance, but when my colleague talks about training, I have a problem with how the mission statement is being interpreted. Our colleague who fought in Afghanistan and who participated in an operational mentoring mission pointed out that the mission statement sounds very much like the definition of operational mentoring.

What we are saying is that as soon as we put our soldiers at risk, when we triple the number of soldiers, we are no longer talking about training. We are talking about operational mentoring.

We must not kid ourselves. They will be participating in operational mentoring and they will be divided into groups of about eight soldiers on the ground. They will follow the Kurds and will be attacked. That is where the problems will start.

If I am mistaken, I hope the government will prove otherwise. If that were the case, I do not see why General Vance would have called the mission dangerous and risky. Training is not risky, but operational mentoring is.

•(1855)

[*English*]

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Montcalm suggested that recent events such as the terrible terrorist attack in Paris provide a rationale for continued bombing of Iraq and Syria. I would note that the Paris terrorist attack occurred after a very substantial military campaign had already occurred in the Middle East.

I find the Bloc position and, for that matter, the Conservative position is a bit like the doctor who sees that the medication does not work and therefore just wants to increase the dose.

Given that years of bombing in Iraq have not led to peace and have not stopped terrorism, why does he think that a bit more bombing would work?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Mr. Speaker, unlike my NDP colleague, we heard the call of the UN and what it was asking in the Security Council resolution.

As I mentioned, the Paris attacks and the recent bombings should have made the Prime Minister stop and think. I do not believe that the Canadians who voted for him would have been shocked had he said that the situation had changed and that a UN resolution was calling on us to take action and do our part. In order to protect the people sent into the theatre of operations, we could have left the CF-18s in place. That is the argument I was making.

If we look at the origins of the conflict, we can mention all the fine analyses that some experts did about the fact that we should never have gone into Iraq to destabilize the region under false pretences. However, that is another matter.

Today, we must be pragmatic. Today, we are faced with a situation that requires us to respond in a responsible manner.

[*English*]

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague for Edmonton West.

I would like to start by thanking the men and women of our armed forces who put their lives in danger each and every day, protecting the principles that allow Canadians to continue living in a free and democratic society, one where individuals do not fear for their lives based on religious values, the colour of their skin, sexuality, or gender, values that our previous Conservative government thought should be protected against all odds, and Canadians agree with our position.

It seems the Liberal government fundamentally misunderstands the nature of terrorism and the threat that ISIS poses to the western civilization. It is not simple thuggery or even organized criminality, as stated by the Minister of National Defence, and contrary to his belief, it is not caused by climate change either.

Terror, the likes of which we saw in Paris last fall, is designed to undermine civilization and legitimate systems of government. At its core, its aim is the destruction of democracy and equal treatment of citizens, promoting instead a brutal hierarchical system of control, including the sexual enslavement of women and children, and the murder of religious minorities and of gays and lesbians.

This is an ideology worth fighting against with every tool at our disposal. That is why it is simply unacceptable that while our coalition partners are ramping up their efforts to degrade and defeat ISIS, the government has pulled out a key strategic tool in our military arsenal.

The Prime Minister frequently stands in the House and says that his government is committed to openly consulting and engaging with Canadians. Why then has the Liberal government chosen to ignore the Canadian public when it comes to the fight against ISIS and the brutality it is waging around the world?

This is a fight that has resulted in the deaths of multiple Canadians. It is a fight that has threatened the core principles of western democracies. It is a fight that has seen Canadians recruited and radicalized to join ISIS, many of them just teenagers. It is a fight that has been brought to the steps of the halls of this very House.

I know the Prime Minister and his Liberal government are intent on ignoring the facts and the voices of Canadians in order to blindly fulfill a purely partisan election promise. However, 63% of Canadians say they would either like to see Canada continue bombing ISIS at its current rate or go further and increase the number of bombing missions it conducts, 47% of Canadians believe that withdrawing our CF-18s from the mission will have a negative effect on Canada's international reputation, while fewer than 18% say that it will have a positive one.

Government Orders

The facts are facts. It is difficult for me to comprehend how the Liberals can be so ignorant to the threat that ISIS poses.

Canada's withdrawal from the combat mission against ISIS is a step backward for Canada from our country's traditional role as fighters for human rights and international security. Our men and women in uniform have always fought bravely against those who violate human rights and those who threaten and terrorize the innocent and most vulnerable. When constituents come up to me in the riding or come to my office and ask me why we are not doing everything in our power to wipe out ISIS, what am I to tell them?

The truth is that the Liberal government is not only downplaying Canada's contribution but whittling it down, and all for partisan purposes. The Liberals have said our fighters, our fighter jets, and our pilots have been ineffective. Perhaps there is another plan the government is not telling us about. It would not be the first time a Liberal government has systemically dismantled our military.

The Liberal plan for Canada's mission against ISIS has been indecisive, incoherent, and, frankly speaking, confusing for our allies and for Canadians.

However, pulling out our CF-18s is just one of the factors being debated here in the House. Not only has the Prime Minister left our coalition partners high and dry, he is increasing the exposure of our troops to risk and tripling the number of men and women on the front line. Where does tripling the number of our men and women on the front lines factor into the Liberal campaign promise? I wonder how Canadians feel about that.

• (1900)

Regardless of what the Liberal government calls the mission, more men and women will be put in high-risk positions, deemed high-risk personnel. Simply put, the likelihood of injury, death, or capture is high; again, without a key piece of our military arsenal.

Is the Prime Minister willing to personally deliver the message to the families of our men and women should something terrible happen? Will he stand before those families and say that we did everything we could to protect their mother, father, brother, sister, son, or daughter?

The military plan that the Liberal government has proposed increases the risk to members of the Canadian Armed Forces while reducing security via air support. We will be 100% reliant on our allies to provide air support for our ground troops.

The Liberal government's plan neglects Canada's obligations to stand up for the vulnerable populations and protect Canadians at home and abroad. It is a step backwards from Canada's traditional role, despite what the government says.

Canada has the capacity to contribute to air strikes, along with training and humanitarian support. The Canadian Armed Forces have been doing so very effectively for over a year. At the very least, I ask, as did my friend from the Bloc who is not here now, that the Liberals leave our aircraft and our world-class men and women—

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Members of Parliament are not to refer to the presence or absence of others in the House. I was offended earlier when this gentleman suggested

people were asleep across the way. No one is asleep. We are all listening to the hon. member.

• (1905)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): That is a very good point. I would like to remind all members that you are not to refer to anyone who is not in the House. In any case, that is a good point of order.

The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, I will withdraw my comments and I do apologize to the House for both comments that I made.

At the very least, I ask that the Liberals have our aircraft and our world-class men and women of the Royal Canadian Air Force in a forward position to provide support and safety for our troops, and those of our allies.

The true test of a leader is when he can stand up, face the people who elected him, and admit that he made an error or misjudged a situation. It is okay for him to say he is wrong. It means standing tall and using the information now at his disposal to make the right decision, even if it is not always the right one or the easy choice.

It is truly unfortunate that I cannot identify one single leader across the floor at this moment who will stand up for Canadians. Not a single person has been able to explain why our CF-18s must be removed from the air campaign. While we are putting more boots on the ground, we are also putting more of our men and women in harm's way without the necessary support to ensure their safety. That is a novel word that we have not been talking about a lot in this debate: safety.

Is that not what we should be focusing on? The safety of our men and women who are serving their country and the safety of Canadians here at home. I have a quote from General Rick Hillier that I would like to read. It is pretty powerful:

Every single ISIS leader should never have a single moment in their life when they're not worried about looking at the sky and having a missile come out and end their life, or go to bed and have that door blown in and have some commandos come in and capture or kill them.

This is Canada's fight. ISIS has taken it to our country. ISIS is committing brutal genocide. It has called for and inspired attacks against Canada, including the murder of two Canadian Armed Forces members. As I said earlier, they are recruiting Canadians, many of whom are just kids.

We have an obligation to stand up for the victims of genocide, fight against the twisted ideology, and protect Canadians at home and abroad. We should never have to rely on our allies to protect our Canadian soldiers. If we are going to send more boots on the ground, then we need to ensure the proper force protection is in place.

I offer this in closing, the men and women of our armed forces need to know that just as they stand on guard for our nation and put their lives on the line every single day that we here are fighting for them.

Government Orders

It is our job to ensure that when decisions are made that impact Canadian lives, be it during secret cabinet meetings or on a cocktail napkin on a Liberal campaign bus, that we will continue to stand and fight for those who put their lives in danger, those who risk their lives every single day, so we can sleep soundly, and the maple leaf can stand tall.

Simply put, Canadians deserve better.

Mr. Raj Saini (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's speech and I have a comment. He accused Liberals of sleeping, being incoherent, and ignorant toward our policy. I will read the hon. member a quote, which states:

It's very clear to us that this is an absolutely correct moment for us to be ceasing the direct air strikes. I'm intensely proud of the fact that Canada is staying committed and, in fact, intensifying its efforts. We're growing our commitment and we're putting the trainers directly on the ground that will absolutely achieve that critical path that's necessary beyond the striking of ISIL, to support those whose country it is to deal with the security threat and ultimately lead to greater stability.

He said that our policy was incoherent. He said that Liberals were ignorant and accused us of sleeping. The person who made the statement was the Chief of the Defence Staff General Jonathan Vance.

Is the member accusing him of being ignorant? Is he accusing him of being incoherent and does he believe that he is sleeping on the job?

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is that the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Defence stood in the House and told Canadians that they are tripling our men and women on the ground. They have also admitted that they are putting them in riskier situations.

Our CF-18s are a key piece of our military arsenal that can provide safety and support. I do not understand, and neither do the members of my party on this side, why we need to rely on the generosity of others to provide safety and support for our own men and women. When tripling the number of boots on the ground, why would we not leave our CF-18s there, where they are effective and can support our troops?

I do not know General Vance, but would it not make sense that we keep a key piece of our military arsenal there to support our troops?

• (1910)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech.

I am finding it difficult to discern the Conservatives' position on Canada's mission against ISIL. On the one hand, they are criticizing the government because it wants to increase our presence and the number of Canadian soldiers in the area. On the other hand, in his speech, the member seemed to be saying that the Prime Minister will be responsible for any loss of Canadian life.

The member's solution seems to be to revert to the mission as proposed by the Conservatives. Unfortunately, in that mission, which included air strikes, we sadly lost a Canadian, Sergeant Doiron. Therefore, I wonder if his solution really is to revert to the type of mission that existed under the Conservatives and caused the death of a Canadian Forces soldier.

Does the member really believe that the solution is to revert to the type of mission that existed under the Conservative government?

[*English*]

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, I had a great opportunity to be in Sherbrooke, Lac Magog, during the 2013 Canada Summer Games and I had a very enjoyable time. I hope to go back to visit the member's riding.

The Prime Minister, the Minister of National Defence, and other colleagues across the floor have echoed that they are tripling the number of men and women who will be in riskier situations on forward lines. Our message is clear. We are as confused as the hon. member about the government's plan. They are putting more men and women of the armed forces in harm's way, but they are taking a key piece of our military arsenal out of it.

Our stance is very clear. They should leave the CF-18s there, where they are effective, where they can provide safety and support for our military, and not pull back when our allies are ramping up.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak on the government's motion pertaining to Canada's anti-ISIL mission. However, first, like several others, I wish to thank the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces for their service. I would also note that I know that my colleagues, both on this side and the other side of the House, also support our forces unequivocally. I know we all wish the best for Canada and its interests, but just think we should go about it a different way.

Canada has a long and proud tradition of helping our allies when it comes to stopping evil and terror from spreading throughout the world. Make no mistake, ISIL's main goal is to do just that, spread terror and its evil ideology around the globe.

I support the notion of stopping ISIL dead in its tracks, but the motion before the House today does not do that. Instead, it weakens our abilities in the fight while sending a contradictory message to our men and women who are in the trenches fighting to keep us safe.

I would like to dispel some of the misconceptions being spread by certain members on a certain side of the House, who claim that the actions put forth in the motion are taking the fight directly to ISIL.

Let us begin with the fact that the government wants to end air strikes against ISIL targets. The decision to do so is simply an uninformed one. I know how much the government loves to say its policies are evidence-based, but the evidence is against it on this one. It is a fact that air strikes have been the safest and most effective form of eradicating the enemy, especially one like ISIL, a group that is dispersed across a vast amount of land in pockets of population. Unlike ISIL, which has a ground game and no modern technological capabilities, we are able to hugely degrade ISIL through our air strikes, keeping our men and women safe and out of harm's reach. The Americans, British, and French are doing it. What is even stranger is the fact that all these countries except Canada are contributing to an air strike mission against ISIL.

Government Orders

None of our allies have asked us to pull our fighters out. In fact just the other day, the American general leading the coalition air campaign against ISIS jihadists called our government's decision to pull the jets out. Lt.-Gen. Charles Brown just yesterday said: "Ideally, I would like the Canadians to come back at some point, but I know that there are local decisions that have to be made in Canada for that to happen." Those local decisions are merely partisan political decisions being made by the government as a result of a campaign promise during the previous election.

The government has broken its campaign promise on its tax hikes being revenue neutral. It has broken its campaign promises on settling Syrian refugees. It has broken its campaign promises on how large the deficit will be. Pulling out our CF-18s is one campaign promise I would dearly love to see our Liberal government break. It is sad to see that the government is taking direction not from defence and intelligence officials but from political backroom staff and campaign war rooms.

Strangely enough, while the government plans on pulling out our fighter jets, it is sending more Canadian men and women out into the field. This is simply dangerous for our men and women in the Canadian Armed Forces, and potentially deadly. Sending more Canadian boots on the ground to assist with training and humanitarian support while depleting our air power capability leaves our men and women in uniform vulnerable. This move sets a very dangerous precedent. When we deploy Canadians on mission we back them up with all our capabilities. We do not handicap them, nor put them in further danger because of campaign promises.

The Liberal government, however, is deploying more Canadians while significantly scaling back our capabilities that would ensure their safety. It is putting our ground forces at risk, not because of a coherent plan but because of a campaign promise. We have heard again and again in response to why it is pulling out our jets that it is a campaign promise. It is not because it is best for our forces or our allies, but it is a campaign promise.

Canada has the capacity to continue to contribute to air strikes alongside training and humanitarian support. Canadian Armed Forces personnel have been doing so very effectively for the past six months.

Our party has said repeatedly that we do not oppose increased ground forces, but oppose the decision to pull out our CF-18s.

The motion makes it clear the Liberals remain incoherent on the air combat mission. They have not provided any explanation on how the withdrawal of the CF-18s will help the coalition more effectively defeat ISIS. Despite the Liberal government's supposed opposition of bombing, Canadian aircraft will continue to refuel planes that conduct air strikes and we will continue to identify targets for allied planes to strike.

• (1915)

To add to the confusion, while the government pulls out our CF-18s, there is talk about deploying four of our Griffon helicopters. We do not know why this is being done and how the helicopters will be used in furthering our objective of eradicating ISIS. However, I can say this much. The Conservative caucus has several questions for the government. Why are these helicopters being deployed? Will

they be used for combat, and if so, how? What precautions will be taken to protect our helicopter pilots and crews from enemy ground fire, given the removal of our air capabilities?

I realize that this is not question period, so I will stop my questions. However, they highlight a multitude of problems and a lack of clarity in the government's decision to whip out our helicopters and throw them into an active war zone, not to mention the fact that deploying our helicopters while simultaneously removing our CF-18s highlights the incoherent, ill-conceived plan put forward by the government.

Allow me to say that not one of our allies supports this decision by the Liberal government to pull out of the air strike mission against ISIS. No one has asked the Prime Minister to pull out, and no one is cheering on this move, except for the Prime Minister and his caucus.

While our Prime Minister is pulling back and hiding behind the shadows of our allies, our allies are leading the charge against ISIS. This could not be made more clear than Canada being snubbed by our allies at a recent anti-ISIS meeting. Six months ago, our foreign affairs minister hosted an international meeting in Quebec City to discuss the military and political aspects of the mission against ISIS. Today we are not even welcome to have a seat at the table.

While our coalition partners are stepping up their efforts to degrade and defeat ISIS, the Liberal government is stepping back. The decision to withdraw Canada's CF-18s is seen by our allies as stepping back rather than standing shoulder to shoulder with them.

It is also quite clear that this move has absolutely nothing to do with Canada's long-term strategy for fighting ISIS. Rather, it is nothing more than a political stunt being orchestrated by the government and its PR team.

This motion is a disgrace for our military and a disgrace for our allies, and it weakens our standing in this world. For these reasons, I will not be supporting the motion.

• (1920)

Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we are winding this debate down, I thought we should do a kind of compare and contrast.

On the advise-and-assist mission, the Liberal Party is proposing a mission three times the size of the Conservative mission. The Liberal Party is proposing a mission on intelligence twice the size. Actually, the Conservatives are not proposing any intelligence mission whatsoever.

We are proposing a medical capability. The Conservatives are not proposing any capability whatsoever. We are proposing using four helicopters. The Conservatives are not proposing the use of any helicopters.

We are proposing enhanced diplomatic engagement. The previous government pretty well burned every diplomatic bridge in that region, so anything is an improvement over what the Conservative position has been.

Government Orders

To the credit of the previous government, it engaged in humanitarian assistance. We have actually upped the humanitarian assistance. We have as of this week brought into this country something in the order of 24,000 refugees. Under the Conservative plan, no refugees would be here.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. John McKay: I went through this election, Mr. Speaker, along with you and everyone else. It was the Prime Minister who drove the commitment to receive refugees in this country, and it was opposed by that party, which sowed the seeds of fear of terrorists among the refugees.

Who is stepping up here and who is stepping back?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, I used to live in my colleague's riding. It is a beautiful area.

I am happy to address the member's comment about burning bridges. We on this side are very happy to burn bridges with despotic regimes like Syria, and we are happy not to have any bridges to burn with people like ISIS. I thank him for that.

We appreciate the added support that we are giving to our allies with the ground force. We are saying, and have said all along, that we do not oppose that; what we oppose is the nonsensical decision to withdraw our CF-18s that are supporting those people.

There is no one on that side of the House who has once answered why we cannot do both. We can do all of that and we can leave our CF-18s in there to help our allies and protect our troops. Without those CF-18s, when our troops were under fire a month ago they would have been left without air cover. Our CF-18s went and supported our ground troops who were helping out there. You are going to strip those soldiers of that support. Therefore, we are very happy to not oppose the added support for our allies. However, we are saying leave the CF-18s in there.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order, please. I would remind the hon. members to speak through the Chair. I do not think I will be stripping anyone of anything.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise at the closing hours of debate to raise with the member for Edmonton West some fundamental questions about where we stand as a country. While I vote against this resolution, I do applaud the removal of the CF-18s. I do not think we have any evidence that the CF-18s had any hope whatsoever of eradicating the force called the Daesh. If we were to continue on the mission of the previous government, we run the very large risk of propping up another government that the member described earlier as despotic.

How does the current official opposition imagine that we can eradicate the terrorist threat of the Daesh while ignoring that there are multiple factions in a civil war on the ground in Syria and that the matter cannot be solved by Canadian jets?

• (1925)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, I also used to live in Saanich. It is a beautiful area. Having lived from Victoria to Newfoundland, I will be getting to each of the members eventually.

We are not saying that jets alone will do it. We have never said that. We believe in a complete mission. We are saying that if our Canadian Forces are there, we should have our jets there supporting and protecting them, and helping our allies.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in the House and debate important issues to all Canadians. I believe our responsibility and our commitment in the fight against ISIL is one of those extremely important issues facing Canadians and those of us in Parliament.

I will be splitting my time, Mr. Speaker, with the hon. member for Perth—Wellington.

First, I would like to thank the brave men and women who wear our nation's uniform in the Canadian Armed Forces for their professionalism and their dedication to service. I believe I am speaking on behalf of all members in the House when I say we are tremendously proud of what they have achieved. Because of their world-renowned reputation, we are honoured to call ourselves Canadians.

Our men and women of the Royal Canadian Air Force are some of the best pilots, the best air crew and the best technicians anywhere in the world. We have an incredible history from the early days of World War I to Billy Bishop to the accomplishments we made through World War II, Korea, Afghanistan, and even today. We made a reputation for being some of the best fighting men and women anywhere in the world.

The brave men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces are always willing to do the heavy lifting, which includes degrading and defeating ISIS, a terrorist group committing mass atrocities, inspiring terrorist attacks around the world, and has declared war not only on the Middle East, but Canada and our allies.

Our contribution to the fight against ISIS has been absolutely incredible. Our men and women in uniform have protected our soldiers, helped stave off the advance of terrorism, and played an integral role in the coalition. I would like to thank them very much for everything they have done.

Before I get into the nuts and bolts of my speech and my debate, the one thing I really feel is important to mention here is the disingenuous debate we are having on this topic at all. The fact is that the Prime Minister announced that he had already halted the CF-18 mission before the debate even started. He has disrespected the House, every member of Parliament, and, most important, he has disrespected every Canadian who wanted a fulsome open debate on an issue of this magnitude. They want a real debate within the House of Commons, but they are not getting that debate because they know the decision has already been made.

Government Orders

If they do not think Canadians care about due process, I would encourage the government and the Prime Minister to speak to the Alberta NDP government. It made a similar mistake in December when it put forward a farm bill and had consultations, debates and meetings after third reading was already scheduled. What happened? Every farmer and rancher in Alberta became extremely upset. They made a huge difference and rallied for their friends and neighbours. The Liberals should take a real lesson that Canadians will not stand by and let these disingenuous decisions be made without having a fulsome and legitimate debate within the House of Commons.

I find it somewhat ironic that the government is making such a decision. Last year when we voted in the House to proceed to put our military in Syria and Iraq, I heard lots of calls and consternation from the other side saying we were not having enough debate on taking military action in the fight against ISIS. However, we had a real debate and we had a real vote on taking that action. Each and every member of the House had the opportunity to speak before a decision was made, something the Liberal government has not given us the benefit of the doubt to do. It should be ashamed of taking that action.

I had an opportunity earlier this week to speak to several military families in my riding. I wanted to ask them how they felt about what was going on in Syria and Iraq and about the motion being put forward by the Liberal government. Their message was crystal clear, and I cannot stress this enough. If ever there was a time for them to get in the fight, this was it. This is what they have trained for, to fight against the atrocity of ISIS. If there were ever a time where they felt it was the moment to put their life on the line, this was it.

They understand that ISIL is a threat not only to the Middle East, but it is a threat to Canadians at home and abroad. They want to do everything they possibly can to protect Canadians. To do that, they need to be part of the fight. They need to be in the action. That is what they have trained for, that is what they want to do. They have not spoken to one single member of the military who does not believe we should be in this fight against ISIL.

● (1930)

Yesterday, the Liberal government's position on this became really quite clear. A member of the Liberal Party said that our military contribution in the fight against ISIL was just a token gesture. I cannot believe the disrespect the member would show to our men and women in uniform who are putting their lives on the line to fight one of the most disgusting things we have seen in a generation. The Liberals call that a token gesture. I find that completely disrespectful to the men and women of our military.

Our job is supposed to be to support our allies with whatever contributions we can make. For example, Belgium has two fighter jets as part of the coalition—just two. Belgium is not pulling out its jets, nor do I believe our allies are calling Belgium's contribution a token effort. If the Liberals truly believe that our commitment and our contributions to the coalition are a token effort, why does the motion they have put forward not include an increase in our air support? Why does it not call for having 12 CF-18s, if the Liberals believe this is really a token effort, instead of pulling out the six CF-18s we now have there?

This member also questioned whether ISIL was even a terrorist group at all. I find it quite astonishing that the current government would be this out of touch with what ISIL really represents.

Moreover, I find it incredible that it would be this out of touch in understanding the magnitude of the impact our CF-18 have had in the fight against ISIS. For example, our CF-18s have conducted more than 250 bombing missions; and as of February, 249 missions against ISIS fighting, 83 against ISIS equipment and vehicles, and 24 against ISIS improvised explosive factories and storage facilities. Despite this success, we are taking our dogs out of the fight.

Not only are we taking a major asset out of the fight, we are putting our men and women on the ground at further risk. The Liberals argue that pulling our CF-18s will not mean further risk to our men and women on the ground. This is simply not the case.

First, I for one do not want to rely on someone else to protect our men and women in uniform. I think that is our job. Our Canadian Armed Forces and our Royal Canadian Air Force train together. They communicate with one another. They know they can depend on one another. Without our CF-18s, there is a significant safety risk and they are reducing the capabilities of our Armed Forces. Six CF-18s have the same impact in a fight as 400 to 600 boots on the ground. What is safer? Is it 600 boots on the ground, or 6 in the air? My argument is that we would be much safer and at less risk if kept our CF-18s in the fight.

Second, our CF-18s are absolutely the most technologically advanced aircraft among our allies in the coalition. They absolutely have capabilities that some of our allies do not. This means that they could take on tasks other air forces in the coalition would not be able to do.

Third, we are losing our influence in the planning. When we take a major asset out of the fight, we are losing a spot at the big-kids' table. We are going to be on the bench. I do not think that in a fight of this magnitude, Canadians expect us to be sitting on the bench.

Government Orders

Also, our military may be handicapped. There are differences in rules of engagement among our allies, differences in communication, and definitely differences in priority. One of the things I am really concerned about with this decision is the communication between our CF-18s and our ground forces, as well as the fact that we will not be a priority for allied air forces. For example, we saw this in Afghanistan when we did not have our CF-18s there. Many of the missions we put forward were delayed because we were waiting for allied air assets. God forbid that something would happen that our men and women would be in danger and they did not have air support. Knowing that our CF-18s are there, those on the ground would be reassured that they are always the number-one priority for our CF-18s. Our Royal Canadian Air Force would be there to back them up. They have trained together, they communicate with one another, and it is a huge morale booster for our men and women on the ground knowing our CF-18s are there.

In conclusion, I would like to say that our men and women in the military want our CF-18s there. Our allies want our CF-18s there. Most importantly, the vast majority of Canadians want our CF-18s there. Of all the broken promises that the current Liberal government has had in the last 100 days, why is this the one it is so adamant to keep when the rest of Canadians do not agree with it?

I implore the Prime Minister and the members of this House to vote against this motion.

● (1935)

Ms. Joyce Murray (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to the speeches by Conservative members, reiterating many times that our new reformed mission is unpopular with our allies. Perhaps I could read to them what the Pentagon had to say:

The Canadian announcement is the kind of response the [U.S.] secretary [of defense, Ashton Carter] has been looking for from coalition members as the United States and our coalition partners push to accelerate the campaign against ISIL.

The selective quoting that members opposite are using does not add to a robust debate on the situation.

That member is accusing the Liberal government of sitting on the bench, but what the government is doing is standing with our coalition partners. We are standing with the people of Lebanon and Jordan who are overwhelmed with refugees. We are helping them fund the necessities of life there. We are standing with the Iraqi soldiers by helping with training so they can take the fight on the ground.

This was a campaign promise and it is consistent with this government's stand. Why would the member counsel the government to break a campaign promise that is exactly consistent with what our stand has been on this for the last year and a half?

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's question, but she has made a lot of mistakes in it. She asked why we would want the government to break a promise. The Liberal government has broken many of them in the first 100 days. To say that the government does not want to break this one is really interesting.

The member also said that we are picking and choosing quotes. Lieutenant General Charles Brown, in the *National Post* yesterday, took a different stance. He said that he would rather have our CF-18s

there and if the political view of the government would change at some point in the future, our CF-18s would be welcomed back. The member can accuse us of picking and choosing all she wants, but there are two sides to that story.

This comes down to the Liberals standing on the sidelines. As I said today, this is not necessarily even what our allies want. This is what Canadians want. The majority of Canadians believe our CF-18s should be there. The majority of Canadians believe we have a significant role to play in the fight against ISIS. To ignore the wishes of Canadians and our men and women in the military just to keep that one campaign promise is the wrong decision.

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Foothills has suggested that we need to deploy military assets in order to have a seat at the table.

Would the member for Foothills not acknowledge the fact that there is often a need in international affairs for honest brokers and that one of the ways to have influence is not necessarily to be involved in the fighting, but to be perceived as a neutral party that other countries can trust and can talk to in diplomatic terms?

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, the member brought up a good point. In an issue of this magnitude, we cannot just stand back and say that we will let the others do the fighting and then when we are needed to be a referee, maybe we will be there. If we want to really be a part of the solution, then we need to step in and be a part of the solution. We cannot expect everyone else to do the dirty work for us and then come in at the end when everything is rosy and say that we are ready to be a part of the discussion process. We need to be there with boots on the ground, getting our hands dirty, working with our allies shoulder to shoulder, and be part of the solution. We should not sit back and let others do the dirty work for us.

● (1940)

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to rise in the House today at this late hour to be one of the final speakers on what is a very important motion about a very important issue.

It is important to begin by acknowledging the brave men and women of the Canadian Forces, especially in the Royal Canadian Air Force for all they have done in the mission to this point. It is also important to recognize the families and loved ones of those members of the Canadian Forces. When our brave men and women are deployed, so often it is their loved ones, their families, manning things at home and keeping the support when they are overseas. Their families and loved ones are owed a great deal of respect and thanks as well.

Canada's men and women in uniform are called upon to travel to some of the most hostile and uninhabitable places in the world to protect the most vulnerable, to fight terrorism, and to promote Canadian values. The Canada we have today would not be this great country if it were not for the past sacrifices of the brave men and women who have worn our uniform.

Government Orders

I am pleased that the government was actually bringing this debate to the House because I believe it is important that we have a fulsome debate on a military deployment. That was the convention that was ingrained in this great Parliament by our previous government. When important military issues were to be undertaken, they were brought to Parliament to be debated and voted upon.

Therefore, I was initially pleased that the government was bringing the motion to the House, only to find out that, as the Liberals were presenting the motion, they had already ended the CF-18 mission. It is disingenuous at best and it is disappointing that they would break this convention that this great Parliament has set.

Canada must not be a passive player on the world stage. We must and should be a global leader in the protection of human rights and in the fight against terrorism. We must stand up for the rights of people suffering around the world and stand against those who commit horrendous and heinous acts against the most innocent in our societies.

Canadians are disappointed with their government and the steps it has taken away from the important mission against ISIS. In fact, last July, the member for Niagara Falls, previously the minister for foreign affairs, hosted an international meeting here in Canada of those nations who are contributing to the fight against ISIS.

Our then minister of foreign affairs hosted that meeting. Fast forward to Paris recently, there was another such meeting of our allies who are undertaking a mission against ISIS, but Canada was not even invited. We went from hosting the meeting to not even being invited. This seems to be an emerging trend with the current Liberal government when it comes to its foreign policy.

I find it interesting that the Prime Minister and Liberals often claim that their first act of coming to office was to propose a middle class tax cut. The fact of the matter is that it was not their first act. Their first act was for the Prime Minister to call up President Obama and say that he was withdrawing our CF-18s from the fight against ISIS. That was his first foray into international relations and international politics. It was to withdraw from the fight.

Canada must continue to play an important role in Iraq and Syria against ISIS.

Upon hearing the news of our withdrawal of the CF-18s, Jabar Yawar, chief of staff and spokesman for the Kurdish regional government's Peshmerga ministry said, "It is bad news for us. Canada was a major partner in the coalition and it was a great help to Kurdistan".

Canada is abandoning our allies in the region. The decision to withdraw Canada's CF-18s is nothing more than the fulfillment of an ill-conceived campaign promise. What is most troubling is that neither the Prime Minister nor the Minister of National Defence, nor, frankly, any member opposite has really provided an explanation as to why or how withdrawing our CF-18s is actually helpful to our international allies. The government's new course is not the best strategy to combat ISIS and it is hurting Canada's reputation on the world stage.

What is more confusing about the position the government has taken is that while the Liberals oppose the CF-18s actually carrying

out any actual bombing, under the plan being put forward, Canadians and Canadian aircraft will still participate in the refuelling of planes and identifying targets for the international coalition. The Liberals want the benefits of appearing to withdraw, but still want to be in the fight as well. They cannot have it both ways.

● (1945)

When historians look back at how Canada and its forces contributed to the fight, I think they will find us wanting on this particular point. Withdrawing the CF-18s will serve to be a major point of contention and a disappointment going forward.

In November 2015, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum released a report that ISIS had committed genocide against Iraq's Yazidi population. It found that ISIS fighters had carried out crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and war crimes against other minorities. Why is the government choosing to turn its back in the face of such evil?

While some members across the way are hesitant to use the word genocide, that is exactly what it is, and that is exactly why Canada and its CF-18s should be part of the fight. In fact, Canadians continue to support this viewpoint. Recently, on February 6, 2016, an Angus Reid poll found that 63% of Canadians would like to see Canada continue the bombing mission. In fact, some would like to see our bombing mission even further enhanced. The Canadian public understands the importance of the fight against ISIS and of being actively involved in the CF-18 mission.

We can also be extremely proud of the men and women of the air force. Colonel Sean Boyle, who commanded the air force task force for Iraq between April and October 2015, recently confirmed that Canadian bombing missions did not lead to any civilian casualties. This speaks volumes to the skill and professionalism of our brave men and women in uniform. Why would the Liberal government want to withdraw our most effective fighter pilots instead of commending them and giving them a vote of confidence for their hard work and the skill with which they have participated in this mission thus far?

Taking our CF-18s out of this mission is a further step in reducing our standing and Canada's presence on the world stage. Much as they are doing in an effort to seek to normalize relations with Iran, the government is damaging our reputation abroad. If we are not willing to take a firm stand against nations and terrorist groups that commit horrendous acts, like ISIS, we will no longer be respected to the degree we are on the world stage.

Further, from 2012 on, our previous Conservative government committed \$1 billion in humanitarian development and stabilization aid in the region. This was part of a multi-faceted approach to fighting ISIS. There was not only the military effort with the CF-18s but also humanitarian and development assistance for those on the ground.

We cannot deliver humanitarian aid if we are not providing military support. We cannot build for peace if we are not willing to fight for peace.

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Canada must show that it is willing to stand up for our values and freedoms: freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly and association, the equality of women, and the rule of law.

Canadians understand the importance of the responsibility to protect. It is not enough to simply talk about rights and freedoms; we must be willing to defend the defenceless when called upon, not just in words but with force, when necessary. When dealing with a group as evil as ISIS, force is necessary.

I am proud to stand in the House and oppose the motion put forward by the Liberal government. Withdrawing our CF-18s at this time shows a lack of confidence, on that side of the House, in our brave men and women of the Canadian Forces. I am proud to stand with the men and women of the Royal Canadian Air Force and commend them on all they have done thus far in the fight. I would encourage the government to re-evaluate the proposal and leave our CF-18s in the fight.

● (1950)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that the Conservatives are having a difficult time understanding the fact that the Liberal government, through an election campaign period that lasted quite a number of days, talked a lot about withdrawing the CF-18s and refocusing the mission. Then on October 19, Canadians voted overwhelmingly to give a majority government to the Liberal Party.

Liberals are fulfilling an election commitment. There is no surprise for the global coalition. It is very much aware. We are refocusing.

We have incredible Canadian Forces and have a great deal of gratitude and appreciation for them. We have some of the best in the world. We are going to have some of the best training missions. We are going to have great humanitarian aid. There are a lot of things the government has actually committed. The world and the coalition are quite happy with Canada's role, as has been noted.

Why will the Conservative Party not recognize that there is more involved than just the CF-18s? If the world coalition has accepted it, why will the Conservatives not accept what Canadians voted for on October 19 and what the world coalition has already said, which is that it is quite content with Canada's role?

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Winnipeg North for his question. It is nice to hear him speak in the House from time to time.

I would just go back to the fact that recently Angus Reid polling found that 63% of Canadians actually support our continued bombing mission. More to the point of the question, we can do both. We can provide humanitarian assistance and we can continue the CF-18 mission in the region. In fact, it is almost incumbent upon us to do both. We cannot deliver the humanitarian assistance, the humanitarian aid and the stabilization in the region, and the diplomatic assistance, if we are not providing the military assistance as well.

I am proud of our government's past associations with our international allies. Our allies are relying on us. I have yet to know of

any of our allies who have said that they do not need our CF-18s and that we should pull them out completely. The fact of the matter is that our allies would prefer that they were there. The U.S. task force commander in the region, for the air force, has said as much.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, earlier the member for Scarborough—Guildwood suggested that at this late hour of the debate maybe we need a little comparison.

For New Democrats who think we would be more effective in cutting off the flow of funds, arms, and foreign fighters to ISIS, I look at the core of this motion. It is a military mission that looks very much like the old Conservative military mission.

In terms of the bombing, we are doing everything except using CF-18s to do it. We are using refuelling aircraft, surveillance planes, and we are painting targets on the ground. In terms of the training missions, it is an expansion of what the Conservatives had already started.

My question to the Conservative members is, do they actually support the other part of this military mission? Do they support the expansion of the training on the ground, which will put more Canadians at risk of direct combat with ISIS? Apart from what we have all heard from the members, that they are opposed to taking out the CF-18s, do they support the part of the mission that expands the training?

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, we do not oppose an expansion of the training mission or development aid in the region.

What we do oppose is cutting and running on the CF-18 side of the mission. We believe that we are best served, and that our allies are best served, by leaving our CF-18s in the fight, by providing the assistance that our brave men and women in the Canadian Forces and those on the ground require.

That is why our former Conservative government undertook that mission. That is what we would like to see continued.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before we resume debate, I would remind the hon. member that his remarks will be interrupted at 8 o'clock. It is now 7:55.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

It seems to me that if a member rises before 8 o'clock, he can keep talking until he has finished what he has to say. My understanding is that a member may not rise after 8 o'clock, but may complete his remarks. As I understand it, I can continue.

● (1955)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The House has decided that this sitting will end at 8 o'clock. I usually allow members to finish their thought, and then I move on.

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not like war, I do not like conflict, and I do not like fighting. Over the past few days, many of my colleagues have told the House what they think of the war against ISIS. This is not a war in the traditional sense of the word because the enemy does not have a country.

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That is actually what worries me most about what is going on right now in Syria, Iraq, Africa, and everywhere. The new enemy of the modern world is stateless. What does that mean? It means that this new enemy has nothing to lose. If we manage to gain ground, all that means is a setback for the enemy in a country that does not belong to it anyway.

No matter where it is, this new enemy is not at home. It cares little for the people left broken, mutilated, dead, and raped in its wake because it does not want territory, it wants souls, and unfortunately, it has no territory. Fortunately, it has no territory.

I do not like war, I do not like conflict, I do not like fighting. As representatives of Canadians, we must ask ourselves how we can face this new enemy that does not use recruitment centres to recruit soldiers, but uses Internet forums, which are unfortunately filled with impressionable people who are prepared to believe someone who promises them happiness on this earth or elsewhere.

They have no country, no land. They have only enemies that they have learned to hate and detest. They have only enemies that they must destroy, kill, rape. These soldiers have nothing to lose but their illusions, and they are convinced that dying will bring them even closer to victory over their enemies.

The so-called Islamic State is a threat to the entire world. As I said earlier, this insidious war is nothing like the other major conflicts we courageously fought over the centuries. Our enemy can choose any battlefield. No one is immune. We have even experienced it here, in Canada.

Fortunately for us, our enemy chose to concentrate on a very specific area by calling all its sympathizers to arms in the hopes that it could take advantage of a people's suffering and the disorganization of areas already at war to gain credibility and claim territory. It is shamelessly stealing that territory from local populations.

We have a unique opportunity to live in a country where it is still possible to live a life free from war. I am very grateful for that. Even if everything goes well, Canada is not immune. We know that. People died here in Canada, victims of this terrible war. I do not like this war, but we have to fight it. We cannot turn a blind eye. The ocean and the miles of land that separate us from the battlefield do not make us immune.

As long as these soldiers without a country believe they have a chance of winning the war, they will continue to target innocent people. Unfortunately, just recently, the so-called Islamic State won a victory as a result of our weakness. A member of the coalition decided to withdraw from the combat zone. Without dropping a single bomb on that country, the so-called Islamic state brought it to its knees. The longer the conflict goes on, the more such victories ISIS will win.

Unfortunately, this government's decision to withdraw the CF-18s from the mission is the sort of victory ISIS is looking for. For purely political reasons, the Liberal government granted ISIS this moral victory. There is still time for the government to change things and take away this moral victory it gave ISIS. It is by leaving our CF-18s where they are that we will send ISIS the right message.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

• (2000)

[*Translation*]

CANADA POST

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to discuss this evening the question I asked in the House on January 26 about Canada Post.

To put things into context, in December 2013, Canada Post announced its five-point plan concerning jobs and ending home mail delivery. That came as a shock, because there had not been any consultations. This came out of nowhere without any justification. There was even a budget surplus at the time, which made the situation hard to understand. Of course the process sped up with the election on the horizon and many cities lost their home mail delivery.

Unfortunately, the cities were not consulted and the Canada Post mailboxes popped up everywhere like weeds in springtime. In some places, the location of the mailbox is inappropriate and dangerous. There are community mailboxes at school entrances and daycare entrances. We have even seen some on hillsides. People have a hard time parking their cars and our seniors are really having a tough time. It takes a lot out of them to get to their community mailbox just because of where it is installed. Some trees were completely destroyed when Canada Post cut their roots to install the mailboxes. Thousands of trees have been lost in some neighbourhoods.

We also learned that the boxes were manufactured in the United States, so they were not designed for our climate. Several complaints have been received this winter from people who could not access their mail. That is appalling. On top of having lost home delivery, some people simply cannot get their mail at all. Some have not been able to unlock their mailboxes for a month, because the locks are frozen.

An investigation was launched. Was it because the boxes were manufactured in the U.S.? Was it because of the material used? Did the locks just need some lubrication? One thing is sure: these boxes are not at all suited to our weather conditions, and once again, it is the citizens who are paying the price.

Canada Post is a public service. It should be given to the people, because it belongs to them. It is a profitable service. There are many ways to increase Canada Post's profits. Some have suggested opening up banks in post offices. There has also been an increase in the number of parcels.

Getting back to community mailboxes, because Canada Post did not adapt its snow removal standards this winter, many people have not been able to get to their mailboxes. Not only were their locks frozen, but they did not have access to their mailboxes. People have been forced to lie on snowbanks to open their mailboxes and get their mail.

If we still had home delivery, we would not have these problems because we did not have them before. Mail carriers were reliable, they went right to people's doors, and there were many more facilities and services.

Here is my question for the minister tonight: will the government keep its promise to restore home mail delivery for all Canadians?

[*English*]

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part this evening in this debate on the future of Canada Post. I would like to use the time I have been allotted to recap what we said we would do about Canada Post and what we have done.

During the election, we committed to end the further installation of community mailboxes that began under the previous government. We also committed to conducting a review of Canada Post to make sure that it provides high-quality service at a reasonable price to Canadians no matter where they live. This is what we are doing.

One week after the election, Canada Post announced it was suspending the conversion to community mailboxes pending a review.

• (2005)

[*Translation*]

Now, about that review. We made a clear promise to review Canada Post to ensure that it provides the high-quality service that Canadians expect at a reasonable price.

Here is the mandate letter from the Prime Minister to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement.

Details of the review are being finalized. However, there are three things I can say tonight about it.

[*English*]

One, this review will gather together all the pertinent facts around Canada Post, in line with our government's commitment to evidence-based decision-making.

Two, these facts will be shared with Canadians, because our government has set a higher bar for openness and transparency.

Three, through this review, the opinions and views of stakeholder groups and everyday Canadians right across the country will be sought. This is in line with our government's commitment to consult widely and to pursue goals collaboratively.

In other words, Canadians will have a say in the future of their postal service. Their concerns will be heard through what will be a

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thorough, evidence-based process. I hope all parliamentarians will encourage and be part of this national dialogue.

[*Translation*]

Canadians highly value Canada Post. From a practical standpoint, this corporation helped us connect with each other across our vast country for a long time.

The government believes that if we want to have a helpful discussion on the future of Canada Post, Canadians should, as consumers, have a better understanding of the services offered by Canada Post, of the pressures this corporation currently faces, and of its financial realities.

The review will ensure that Canadians have access to information on Canada Post. The corporation will also have a chance to participate in an informed discussion. Canadians and the government will be able to make decisions together about the future of Canada Post.

Ms. Karine Trudel: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her comments.

I am pleased to hear that Canada Post will be reviewed. I want to offer my assistance to my colleague if she needs additional information or help. I am available to work with her and to participate in the review of Canada Post.

Could my colleague confirm and assure me that our city mayors and all Canadians, from big and small municipalities, will truly be consulted and that their comments will be taken into consideration?

[*English*]

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Mr. Speaker, Canada Post's plan to convert door-to-door delivery has been suspended since last fall, pending the outcome of a review of the corporation.

The government is committed to an open, transparent, and evidence-based review that allows Canadians to have a say in the choices that are made concerning Canada Post.

[*Translation*]

The review will help ensure that Canada Post is providing the high-quality services that Canadians expect, at a reasonable price.

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8:09 p.m.)

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