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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, February 17, 2016

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, February 17, 2016

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of our national anthem led by the hon. member for Don Valley East.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

DRAGUIGNAN BAR ASSOCIATION

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this year is the 25th anniversary of the twinning of the Laurentides-Lanaudière bar association, of which I am currently a member, and the Draguignan bar association in the south of France. Some of my colleagues from Draguignan are here with us today in the gallery. I salute officers Michel Izard and Marie-Pierre Pradeau and their Draguignan bar association colleagues, and I welcome them to Canada's Parliament.

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PLACE DES AÎNÉS SENIORS' CENTRE

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to say a heartfelt thanks to the people of Laval—Les Îles for choosing me to represent them here in the House of Commons. As their member of Parliament, I will be available to each and every one of my constituents from all cultures and backgrounds.

I am also pleased to rise here to recognize the tremendous contribution made by a remarkable woman from Laval, Pierrette Patenaude, who founded the Place des aînés. This seniors' centre, which opened its doors on October 23, 1994, aims not only to engage people aged 50 and over, but also to give them a sense of belonging through a variety of social, cultural and sporting activities.

Place des aînés currently has over 6,000 members. Ms. Patenaude has long been its ambassador and has inspired others to create similar centres all over Quebec and Canada. Raymond Monette is president of Place des aînés, and remains its backbone. We want to thank them for their tireless efforts.

[*English*]

JOHN SIMCOE AWARDS

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House today to recognize some outstanding constituents in my riding of Simcoe—Grey.

On February 27, I will host the John Simcoe Awards. John Simcoe was the first lieutenant-governor of Ontario and a man dedicated to building Canada.

The John Simcoe Awards will be presented to those constituents who have made a difference in building Canada in my riding of Simcoe—Grey. These people have gone above and beyond to make a positive difference in the lives of others in my constituency, selflessly volunteering. This award is an opportunity to show appreciation for the people of my community who truly have made a difference in the lives of others.

I am happy to announce that this year's recipients are: Lorne Winkler of Collingwood, Larry Law of Collingwood, Captain Luc Blanchette of CFB Borden in Essa, David Foster of Wasaga Beach and Janneke Leimgardt of Stayner. I look forward to taking the opportunity to congratulate them and their great contributions.

* * *

KENNETH LEFRANÇOIS

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to a noteworthy Canadian from my riding, who would have celebrated his 71st birthday yesterday. Mr. Kenneth Lefrançois was a husband, a father, a friend, a Rotarian, and a mentor to many.

[*Translation*]

Ken was born in Newfoundland in 1945. This gentle giant made his way to Quebec, where he studied at the University of Montreal before briefly playing for the Montreal Alouettes. Always determined, Ken made a positive contribution to his community. His most recent accomplishment was creating an international Rotarian action group on mental health, the purpose of which is to raise funds to educate people about mental health issues.

[*English*]

His legacy will be one of service, dedication, and hard work.

On behalf of the House, I extend my condolences and thoughts to his wife Raymonde and his two sons, Patrick and Louis, who have joined us in the House today.

Statements by Members

●(1410)

HOUSING

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge the federal government to make immediate investments in the upcoming budget to build public housing.

The consequences of years of federal inaction on housing are evident in the city of Victoria. Our region has been grappling with homelessness and a severe shortage of social housing and affordable rental housing. Today, Victoria has the lowest vacancy rate of any major city in Canada and close to 1,300 households are on a wait list. There are families with children living in motels and shelters. There are people with no option but to sleep in city parks every night.

Our local government, along with housing and social agencies, is working hard on creative solutions to give people temporary shelter, but we all know that what is needed is a permanent solution. We need significant federal investments to increase the housing stock. The city of Victoria and the regional government have projects that can be ready to go once they have a federal partner.

We can do better. We must do better to ensure people have a pathway to opportunity, and the foundation for that is affordable housing for all.

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[Translation]

**NATURAL SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING RESEARCH
COUNCIL OF CANADA AWARDS**

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to extend my warm congratulations to three of my constituents of Châteauguay—Lacolle, who were honoured yesterday at Rideau Hall by the Governor General, His Excellency David Johnston, during the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, NSERC, award ceremony.

The recipients are three members of the same family: Denys Van Winden, Jean-Bernard Van Winden, and Stéphane Van Winden. They won the Synergy Award for Innovation in the category Two or More Companies: Production horticole Van Winden, Les fermes Hotte et Van Winden, and Delfland.

This annual award recognizes examples of collaboration that stand as a model of partnership between industry and universities.

I am proud to pay tribute to the Van Windens and to underscore our government's desire to support researchers and promote their work in order to move Canada forward.

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[English]

RON SOUTHERN

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the passing of an Alberta and Canadian icon.

In the late forties, Ron Southern, along with his father, invested some \$2,000 and started the Alberta Trailer Company to house oilfield workers after the Leduc discovery of oil. That company, now known as ATCO, is now operating in five continents around the world, and employs over 8,000 people.

Ron Southern's legacy in Calgary is more for his philanthropic endeavours, which most people know as Spruce Meadows. Ron and his wife Marg took a piece of land, an old feed lot, on the south end of town and turned it into a world-class equestrian centre.

For the next number of decades, Calgarians will enjoy Spruce Meadows on a beautiful Sunday afternoon in late September. That will be the legacy of Ron Southern.

* * *

NORTH VANCOUVER

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (North Vancouver, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to take the opportunity to thank the people of what I believe to be the most beautiful ridings in all of Canada, North Vancouver, British Columbia, for electing me to represent them in this chamber.

I am very proud to highlight two major initiatives in my riding that speak to this community's entrepreneurial spirit and its commitment to the arts.

On November 27, Seaspan marked the start of construction of the Vancouver Shipyards' new corporate headquarters. This project is part of a broader initiative that will see Seaspan hire an additional 1,300 workers over the next five years, and will help to secure Canada's place as a world-class destination for shipbuilding.

On January 18, I had the privilege of participating in a groundbreaking for the new Polygon Art Gallery. This breathtaking new facility is the product of effective co-operation on behalf of all three levels of government, and will be a platform for fine art, as well as for community events and enhanced tourism.

North Vancouver is a vibrant community, one that is making new investments in community infrastructure to create jobs and growth.

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TIDAL POWER

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tidal power is now emerging as an industry in which Canada can be the number one world leader.

Canada alone has over 42 gigawatts of tidal power potential, and developers are working in the Bay of Fundy right now, just off the shores of Cumberland County, Nova Scotia, creating the technology to harness this incredible potential.

Along with solar, wind, and geothermal energy, the Canadian Council on Renewable Electricity has a wealth of information to share about this growing sector. I will be attending the renewable energy reception tonight, hosted by our very generous Speaker, at 6:00 p.m. today, and hope to learn more about this incredible development.

I urge every member of the House to recognize the significant potential renewable energy holds for Canada in terms of great jobs in research, development, and commercialization.

•(1415)

BRUCE POWER

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today and recognize one of the great citizens in the community of Huron—Bruce, Duncan Hawthorne, president and chief executive officer of Bruce Power. He announced a few weeks ago that he would be stepping down at the end of this year.

Duncan has revolutionized the nuclear industry in Canada, in Ontario, and certainly rejuvenated the economy in Huron—Bruce.

Bruce Power has over 3,000 employees. This year alone, it was record production with eight reactors. It provides 30% of the electricity in the Ontario grid, at under 30% of the average cost. It has secured production until 2064.

In the past 15 years, Duncan has set out, met, and achieved every goal he has endeavoured to take. He has taken the nuclear industry on his back and made it world-class.

All the best in the future to Duncan and his wife, Leslie.

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to speak during Black History Month on the important role that St. Catharines, Ontario played for the abolitionist movement.

My riding is home to the Salem Chapel which is designated as a national historic site. The chapel served as the final stop in the Underground Railroad and a beacon of light where escaped slaves from the United States finally met freedom.

Though many Niagara residents played an important role in the movement, the chapel served as the headquarters for Harriet Tubman, the legendary civil rights activist who used the chapel to lead thousands of slaves to freedom.

It is a fitting tribute that the most recent school built in St. Catharines bears Tubman's name and a statue commemorating her achievements was unveiled this month at the school. It will be a reminder to the students of the important role Niagara played in the pursuit of freedom and the importance to stand up against hate and intolerance.

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KINGSTON

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to help Canada and my own riding mark a special anniversary. Some 175 years ago, on February 10, 1841, Governor General Lord Sydenham announced that Kingston would be the first capital of the united province of Canada.

In June 1841, again 175 years ago, the first Parliament of a united Canada met at Kingston.

Since then, as personified by the service to Canada of Sir John A. Macdonald, Sir Richard Cartwright, Peter Milliken, Flora MacDonal and so many others, Kingston has continued to contribute in spades to our great country.

Statements by Members

Some might suggest that the capital should never have moved.

Regardless, I ask MPs from all sides to join me in marking this Kingston and Canadian anniversary. I thank Lord Sydenham.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency was established in 1949 to support Palestinian refugees.

However, Hamas, listed as a terrorist organization in many countries, including Canada, has used UNRWA resources to attack Israel, notably the storage of weapons and incitement to violence against Israel in schools operated by UNRWA.

Human rights organizations have cited the redirection of funds and materials by Hamas for its own purposes and UN Watch has even accused UNRWA staffers of using their positions to incite attacks against our friend and ally, Israel. This is in direct contradiction of the UN's goal of neutrality.

Canadian aid for Palestinians must go directly to specific humanitarian programs and peaceful infrastructure projects.

We call on the Liberals to find more appropriate ways to deliver humanitarian aid to Palestinians. We call on them to join B'nai Brith and Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center in opposing new funding for the flawed UNRWA.

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[Translation]

VICTOR GOLDBLOOM

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we were deeply saddened yesterday to learn of the death of a man who left his mark on the history of Quebec and Canada. I would like to pay tribute to him because his exemplary humanity inspired thousands of Canadians searching for harmony.

A medical career devoted to children, a political career full of firsts, and a public career dedicated to discovering what unites us: the life of Dr. Victor Goldbloom is the extraordinary journey of a profoundly good person. I had the honour of knowing him a little, too little, but I know that he has left us an outstanding legacy of making connections, reaching out to others and, as he put it so well in his autobiography, building bridges.

I would like to extend our most sincere condolences to his family in their time of grief. To Ms. Sheila Goldbloom and her children, Michael, Jonathan, and Susan, to his grandchildren and his entire extended family, our thoughts are with you, and we will do our best to follow in the footsteps of Dr. Victor Goldbloom.

Oral Questions

●(1420)

MASSIMADI FILM FESTIVAL

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Massimadi festival kicked off yesterday in Montreal, as part of Black History Month. Massimadi is an annual LGBT and Afro-Caribbean film and arts festival.

I want to pay tribute to all those who are participating in the festival and helping to make it a success by creating, working, or attending. Creators and their art raise the profile of the cultures and identities that contribute so much to Montreal, Quebec, and Canada.

For festival-goers, this is a unique opportunity to learn about realities that deserve to be seen and understood. The festival also reminds us that freedom and tolerance are still fragile notions and that we must remain courageous as we stand up for our common values.

I thank the Arc-en-ciel d'Afrique team, as well as all the festival volunteers and partners. I wish them well this year.

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*[English]***CANADIAN FORCES**

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's CF-18s are having a tangible impact against ISIS and are helping to improve the lives of Iraqi civilians.

They have strategically eliminated over 300 targets, including ISIS fighting positions, weapon caches, critical infrastructure, and command centres. Together with our coalition partners, the Royal Canadian Air Force has helped to take back between 20% and 25% of areas previously controlled by ISIS. Media are reporting that the air strikes have reduced ISIS' ability to spread its influence throughout the region and around the world.

The coalition has been targeting cash stores, oil infrastructure, and supply lines. As a result, ISIS only has access to a fraction of the financial resources that were once at its disposal. It can no longer offer lucrative salaries and benefits to ISIS fighters. ISIS is now looking to move its operations to areas where there are less air strikes.

It is shameful that the Prime Minister is making this easier for ISIS by withdrawing Canada's fighter jets.

Canada should continue to take the fight directly to ISIS with our CF-18s, not only because it is the right thing to do but because it is working.

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VICTOR GOLDBLOOM

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I also rise today to mark the passing of Dr. Victor Goldbloom, a remarkable community leader.

Dr. Goldbloom started his career as a politician. He was elected to the Quebec National Assembly from the riding of D'Arcy McGee in 1966 and became Quebec's first Jewish cabinet minister. During his tenure in politics, he served in a number of functions, including

minister of municipal affairs and Quebec's first minister of the environment.

After leaving politics, he was CEO of the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews and then Canada's Commissioner of Official Languages. His excellent work on interfaith dialogue between Jews and Christians earned him recognition from the Vatican.

Victor Goldbloom spent his career supporting the vitality of Quebec's Jewish community and English-speaking community, but he will be sadly missed by a much larger community as all of Quebec and all of Canada mourn the passing of a wonderful human being.

Please join me in offering condolences to Dr. Goldbloom's wife, Sheila, his children Susan, Michael, and Jonathan, and the entire family.

ORAL QUESTIONS*[Translation]***NATIONAL DEFENCE**

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after question period, the House will debate a Liberal motion to pull Canada out of the fight against ISIS. It is shameful that our allies will have to fight without us. Our fighter jets will no longer be eliminating ISIS targets.

How can the Prime Minister withdraw from this fight and leave the combat mission to others?

●(1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we are seeing here today and what we saw here yesterday is that there is one party that wants us to take a lot more military action in the fight against ISIS and another party that wants us to take far less.

During the election, we promised to come up with a responsible plan that involves Canada doing what it can do well and providing more aid. We are going to move forward with that plan and put it into action. That is what we are going to discuss today. I look forward to the informed debate we will have in this regard.

[English]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has always stood up for the most vulnerable, for innocent people under attack for nothing more than their beliefs.

In the past, we have joined those fights with every tool at our disposal. By pulling our CF-18s out of the fight against ISIS, we signal to our allies, and to the world, that we will only do so much to fight terror.

Why is the Prime Minister stepping back when he should be stepping up the fight on terror?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have highlighted many times and as we will continue to highlight, our allies are pleased with Canada's increased commitment to the coalition against ISIS.

What we have right here is one party that always wants to do more militarily in the fight and another party that does not want to do anything militarily in the fight.

Quite frankly, what we ran on and what Canadians voted for was a plan that did what Canada does best, which is to help out in meaningful ways and ensure that we are contributing in a strong, robust, comprehensive way to the fight against the Islamic State.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is wrong when he says his plan to deal with ISIS reflects Canadian values because it only reflects the values that he picks and chooses.

Canadians value standing with our traditional allies. Canadians value helping the vulnerable and the threatened. Canadians value showing true resolve against a brutal enemy. Fighting for these values has always been proudly Canadian.

Why is the Prime Minister choosing to cast these Canadian values aside?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are standing in resolve with our allies in a comprehensive whole-of-government approach. We are helping in meaningful ways. We are standing in favour of helping the most vulnerable and indeed increasing our humanitarian aid and our support for refugees.

We are doing what Canadians have asked their governments to do and that is exactly what we are delivering. We are very pleased to be having this discussion openly in the House of Commons today.

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FINANCE

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me turn to another flawed Liberal plan. In just 100 days the Prime Minister has burned through the Conservative surplus that he inherited.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. That is enough. The hon. member and all members want to hear this, so let us listen. The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Rona Ambrose: Mr. Speaker, it was a surplus confirmed by the finance minister's own department in its final report.

While Canadians are tightening their belts across this country, the Prime Minister clearly has a spending problem.

Can the Prime Minister tell us just how much more debt is he going to pile onto Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the previous government left us with a deficit this year, as the numbers highlight very clearly. We have engaged with Canadians to actually create the kind of growth that has been lacking for 10 years because of mismanagement of the economy by the previous government.

Canadians need investments in their communities, which we are putting forward. They need money in the pockets of the middle class, and help for those working hard to join the middle class. That is what

Oral Questions

Canadians elected this government to do, and that is exactly what we are delivering right now and with our budget.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, Bombardier announced job cuts that will affect more than 2,000 Quebec families. Those families will have a hard time paying the bills. They will have to make difficult decisions.

Does the Prime Minister realize that Canadians are losing faith in his ability to run our economy?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, whenever people lose their jobs, we sympathize with the families, who are going through very hard times. That is why we have committed to investing in economic growth the likes of which we have not seen for 10 years and investing in premium industries and the manufacturing industry.

We are looking at how we can help Bombardier in ways that will benefit the Canadian economy. We are working very hard to generate the growth that we simply did not see during their 10-year reign.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 7,000 jobs are on the chopping block, and 2,400 Quebec families will lose their livelihoods, but all that our Prime Minister has to offer is his sympathy. Bombardier and those families need action, not empty rhetoric.

What will the Prime Minister do to help Bombardier and those families?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we were elected on the basis of our commitment to invest and improve the Canadian economy, including the growth rate. Of course job losses like these are distressing. We still have a lot of work to do to support those families. Our reforms and investments will help, but we also have to be responsible in our use of public funds. That is why we are looking at how we can help Bombardier, a leading light of the aerospace industry not just in Quebec but in Canada as a whole, in ways that will help the Canadian economy.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, four months later, in response to 7,000 job losses, all he has to say is that he is looking into the problem. That is shameful.

[English]

Thousands of Canadians have lost their jobs at Bombardier, adding to the 400,000 manufacturing jobs lost under the Conservatives. The Prime Minister has already said he thinks manufacturing is a thing of the past, but this is people's livelihoods we are talking about. It is about good jobs, their children's future.

How many jobs have to be lost before the Prime Minister will finally act?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect us to be growing the economy in responsible ways and taking responsibility for the kind of investments that need to be made. Unfortunately, inflamed rhetoric and shouting is not going to solve the problem.

Oral Questions

What is going to solve the problem is working hard in a meaningful way to bring the kinds of growth, the kinds of effect on the Canadian economy that we were elected to deliver, and that is exactly what we are going to do.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals had no plan for the aeronautical industry in the election campaign, and people now understand why. They plan to do nothing in the face of thousands of job losses here in Canada.

Yesterday, when we asked the Prime Minister whether or not our mission in Iraq was a combat mission, he could not answer, but a couple of months ago in his election platform he had this to say. “We will end Canada’s combat mission in Iraq.” We know our troops are going to be on the front line. We know they will be spotting for air strikes. We know they will be fighting.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister even compared our mission to what happened with Canada’s troops in the second and first world wars.

This is a simple question. Is this a combat mission, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): We have been consistent, Mr. Speaker, from the very beginning in that we feel that the combat role that the Conservative government engaged us in, dropping bombs on ISIL, was not the best way for Canada to help. Therefore, we have ended that combat mission and we are engaged in training and support on the intelligence side, because this is something Canada can do that will meaningfully help our allies, help the coalition, and bring the fight directly to ISIL with the people on the ground who are going to be able to be most effective.

This is what we are going to be debating and discussing today. I am pleased to see such a wide range of perspectives in the House of Commons.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as usual, the Prime Minister keeps contradicting himself on our role in Iraq. He refuses to use the word “combat” to describe the mission, and yet Canada will continue to co-operate on the air strikes. Our brave men and women in uniform, whose numbers have tripled, will be in the theatre of operations and on the front line. The Prime Minister himself has referenced the First and Second World Wars when talking about this mission.

Why is the Prime Minister refusing to tell Canadians clearly that he is sending our troops into a high-risk combat mission? Why is he refusing to admit that?

• (1435)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just said a moment ago that we know that we are involved in a very dangerous mission, but it is a non-combat mission.

We are focusing on training and support on the ground, so that local forces can bring the fight directly to ISIL. That is what our allies want from us and that is what we will do.

The third opposition party has always opposed engagement of any kind, and the reality is that we know that we need to contribute to the fight against ISIL. That is what we plan to do.

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for more than a year, our CF-18s have been eliminating ISIS fighting positions and taking out its critical supply lines. Every successful bombing has limited its ability to threaten civilians and has weakened ISIS’ capacity.

ISIS has now fled to countries like Libya because air strikes have decimated its funding and weapons. ISIS is on the run.

Why is the Prime Minister abandoning the fight when our contribution to the air strikes is so invaluable?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the current situation in Iraq is that ISIS is not completely on the run. There are pockets of enemy in Mosul and other places.

This war against ISIS cannot be won from the air. It has to be won on the ground. That is the exact reason why we are tripling the training mission and doubling our intelligence capacity as well.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the air strikes are working. The global terrorist threat is real. It has taken the lives of Canadians, both here at home and abroad.

The government’s priority should be ensuring the safety of Canadians. Our CF-18s are important in the fight to destroy ISIS, so it cannot threaten Canadians.

Does the Prime Minister actually believe reasoning with genocidal terrorists would be more effective than missile strikes by our CF-18s?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the hon. member, the fight against atrocities like ISIL’s cannot be won strictly with one capability. We need to look at the wider picture.

We need to look at not just the current fight but the stability of the region, hence, the reason this can only be won by the local security forces.

This is what the coalition needs and this is why we have stepped up, as a nation, shoulder to shoulder with our coalition partners.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have broken several election promises, including the promise to limit the deficit to \$10 billion.

However, they cite the promise to withdraw our CF-18s. The majority of Canadians oppose the Prime Minister’s decision.

Why are the Liberals going against the wishes of Canadians and why are they leaving it to our allies to do the heavy lifting in the fight against the Islamic State?

Oral Questions

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague would agree that the vast majority of experts acknowledge that there is no shortage of air strike capabilities among the coalition.

However, our allies have always maintained that there is an urgent need for training for local fighters.

We are tripling the training for local fighters. Is the opposition against that?

We are doubling the capacity to gather intelligence on the terrorist group. Is the opposition against that?

I could provide a lengthy list of the things that we are doing to help the coalition, things that make Canada a better partner in combatting this terrorist group.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on another subject, there are more than 300 supporters of Canadian Reverend Hyeon Soo Lim on Parliament Hill today, praying and advocating for his release from a North Korean prison camp.

We stand with his congregation and supporters in the hope that Reverend Lim will soon be free.

Can the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs please update this House as to the measures being taken to secure the release of this beloved pastor and human rights advocate?

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like the family and friends of Pastor Lim, we are very concerned about his well-being and his rights.

We continue to be engaged in this case, providing consular service to him and his family.

I have met with advocates for Pastor Lim and members of the Canadian-Korean community, including today. I will be meeting with them after question period.

I can assure the House that we will continue to be engaged in this file until we resolve this case.

● (1440)

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has contributed billions of dollars to the Palestinian Authority over the years: humanitarian aid, justice building, policing, and education. This week, the Palestinian education ministry held a memorial ceremony for an 18-year-old terrorist who was killed after an attack on an Israeli border guard. Palestinian official media gave the event wide coverage.

Will the minister publicly condemn the Palestinian Authority for its continuing incitement of deadly attacks on Israelis?

[Translation]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has very stringent criteria for determining

whom it will provide humanitarian aid to and with which groups it will work.

We control every aspect from A to Z. We ensure that the help is clearly provided. We will do so in every case, including the one our colleague just mentioned. The government will never provide aid without assurances that it will be properly delivered.

[English]

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on another topic, as the government rushes to normalize relations with Iran and the Iranian regime, the government should consider the forthright declaration of the German Chancellor. Angela Merkel says normal relations with Iran will not be restored as long as Iran refuses to recognize Israel's right to exist.

Chancellor Merkel says she and all of her ministers make that point directly in every contact with Iranian counterparts. Could the minister assure all Canadians that all government ministers will do the same?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, we ask the whole world to recognize Israel. Second, there is no way that we will have normal relations with Iran. What we are saying, though, is that we will have relations with Iran, and especially when it is time to speak for Israel.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have had lots of Canadians telling me they are worried about the TPP. They are worried about their jobs, about impacts on environmental regulations, and about rising drug costs. The CEO of Ford Canada said "...there will be no positive outcome for Canadian manufacturing".

However, the Liberals do not seem to be listening to these serious concerns. They signed the deal without studying it and still have not told Canadians what the impacts will be. How can the minister keep pushing such a dangerous deal with no study to back it up?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the TPP, we are doing exactly what we promised we would do during the election campaign. We told Canadians that we would take the time to listen to Canadians and to consult widely on this deal. I myself have been part of more than 50 consultations, and our whole-of-government approach has included more than 200.

This is an important deal for Canadians to talk about. I hear perspectives both pro and con, and we will have a full parliamentary debate before any issue of ratification.

[Translation]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the trans-Pacific partnership is bad news for our economy. A total of 60,000 jobs are at risk, not to mention losses for dairy farmers and the automotive industry. What is more, the TPP creates a number of roadblocks to innovation. The economy is in a downturn, and now is not the time to jeopardize Canadian jobs.

Oral Questions

The Liberals promised real change, but they are moving forward with the agreement proposed by the Conservatives, without even conducting an impact assessment.

How can the government justify ratifying such an agreement?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the NDP is opposing the TPP without even having read it or consulted Canadians. We are doing exactly what we said we were going to do.

The NDP knows that signing the agreement is not the same as ratifying it. The NDP knows that, and it should tell Canadians the truth.

* * *

[English]

FINANCE

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tax changes that do not cost taxpayers a dime, \$10 billion deficit caps, and a balanced budget at the end of the mandate; what are these three things? They are broken Liberal promises, straight out of the platform. It is actually breathtaking to see how quickly these platform promises have been broken in the last 100 days.

Canadians care about balanced budgets, and they care about deficits, because they pay for them at the end of the day through loss of jobs and higher taxes. Therefore, let us ask the Minister of Finance again today. Could he please level with Canadians, because they do care, and tell us how much the deficit is going to be? Is it going to be \$30 billion, as we are reading in the reports?

• (1445)

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will be making smart, necessary, and long-overdue investments to grow our economy to make a real difference for the Canadian middle class and those most vulnerable. That is our plan. It is the plan that Canadians elected us on, it is the right plan for Canada, and we look forward to budget 2016 to give more details.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we look forward to the budget of 2016 as well, because we will actually get a sense as to what the Liberals are going to be doing to the country to not put it on the right track.

We began pre-budget consultations yesterday in committee. That is important because for the first time ever the Canadian public is hearing the costs associated with Liberal platform promises for spending. Spoiler alert: it is in the billions, and it is a big-ticket item.

Again for the Minister of Finance, how much of his \$30 billion deficit is actually going to be in these spending promises made in their Liberal platform?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have the right plan to grow the economy and we have already started. We have started by reducing taxes on nine million Canadians, and we will have measures in budget 2016 that will make a real difference for the most vulnerable and help us to grow the economy.

I will take no advice from the members across the way, who left us with an additional \$150 billion worth of debt. What do we have to

show for it but the lowest growth since the Great Depression, a couple of gazebos, and a fake lake?

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government has completely lost control of the public purse, and that is putting it mildly.

Members will remember that, during the election campaign, the Prime Minister spoke of a maximum deficit of \$10 billion. Now, that amount has become the minimum deficit. Members will also recall that the tax changes were supposed to be revenue-neutral, when in actual fact, they are going to put us \$1.7 billion in debt. To top it all off, the Prime Minister cannot even guarantee a balanced budget in four years.

My question is simple. When will the government really regain control of the public purse?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we were elected with a plan to grow the economy, and we have already begun to do so. We began by cutting taxes for the middle class, and nine million Canadians have more money in their pockets.

In budget 2016, there will be other measures to improve our economic growth. We are going to introduce the Canada child benefit and make significant investments to grow our economy.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the question is for the Minister of Finance.

His own department reported in the *Fiscal Monitor* that from April to November 2015 there was a \$1 billion budget surplus. We post surpluses, while they post deficits.

Yesterday, we voted on a motion to express confidence in the Deputy Minister of Finance and his team. The Liberals voted against it. The question is simple.

If the Minister of Finance does not have confidence in his deputy minister and his team, who does he trust with public finances?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only people who believe that the previous Conservative government left a surplus are the Conservatives. Canadians are not fools. Make no mistake, the Government of Canada will post a deficit for fiscal 2015-16, which is the result of the Conservative government's actions and inactions. A fiscal monitor for a given month is a snapshot of that time. It does not tell the whole story.

* * *

• (1450)

[English]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 2016 marks the 30th anniversary of the Hinton, Alberta rail disaster where 26 people died and another 95 people were injured. Engineer fatigue was identified as one cause of that tragedy. Thirty years later, worker fatigue is still a major factor in derailments, including at Lac-Mégantic.

Oral Questions

The Minister of Transport is mandated to improve rail safety, yet communities along rail lines are left waiting for government action. How many more disasters will there be before the minister finally takes action on engineer fatigue?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this question because I have been speaking extensively about rail safety since I received my mandate to do so.

On the question of fatigue, the member will be glad to know that I have taken action with respect to a complaint that was lodged with CP concerning fatigue of those who are responsible for driving CP trains. We are actively looking into that at the moment.

Rail safety is my number one priority and that of this government. We will be vigilant with respect to that, because so many Canadians are concerned about it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, more and more oil is being transported by rail through our communities, but the government has not created a safe and appropriate framework.

There are new projects on the table, and the status quo the Conservatives left us is not good enough. Municipalities and Canadians are worried. Nearly three years after the Lac-Mégantic tragedy, we are still waiting for more stringent safety rules, improved inspections, the removal of dangerous cars, and increased monitoring.

When will the government show that this is a priority and present a real rail safety plan?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I am happy to share some details and to tell my colleague about the initiatives that have been taken since July 2013, after the tragedy in Lac-Mégantic. These initiatives were taken by the previous government. I have examined them, and there is still work to be done. We will do what is necessary to assure Canadians that their rail systems are safe.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week in Winnipeg, the Minister of Natural Resources met with his counterparts from the United States and Mexico. At this meeting, they signed a memorandum of understanding on green energy collaboration.

Can the minister describe this collaboration model and explain the benefits it will have for Canadian investments in green energy, energy efficiency, and green energy industries?

[*English*]

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hosted our United States and Mexican energy counterparts in Winnipeg, where we signed a trilateral memorandum of understanding on climate change and energy collaboration. I will say that this MOU builds on the good work done by the previous government. It delivers on our government's promise to ensure that

the energy sector remains a source of jobs, prosperity, and opportunity in a world that values sustainable development.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Minister of Natural Resources if there were a double standard when it came to greenhouse gas emissions: one for Canadian oil and jobs, and one for Saudi Arabian oil coming into Canada. The minister completely ignored the question, and so I will give him a chance to answer it today.

The Liberals unfortunately are saying no to only Canadian oil and pipelines. I am wondering if the minister thinks that foreign oil extracted from the ground and shipped to Canada is done so using solar power and hemp-woven ships.

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker, but I need more.

Had the previous government not spent so much time prejudging the National Energy Board, muzzling climate scientists, ignoring traditional knowledge, and finding ways to short-circuit the process, perhaps major resource projects would carry the confidence of Canadians.

Our government will not follow the lead of the previous administration on its path of failure.

• (1455)

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is no answer, and the Liberal government continues to put roadblocks in the way of Canadian oil and the kinds of jobs that pay the mortgages of Canadians.

Canadian oil is extracted responsibly, and environmental protection is at the forefront of the Canadian energy industry. Meanwhile, the Liberals welcome greenhouse-intensive oil from countries like Saudi Arabia, where women have virtually no rights and dissidents are executed.

When will the government be a champion for responsibly extracted and transported Canadian oil?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we are in the process of doing. What we are doing is ensuring that all projects that are currently under review will be put through a number of different lenses.

We know on this side of the House that we cannot have economic growth without environmental sustainability. We cannot have a regular process that does not carry the confidence of Canadians. We intend to do all of those things. As the Prime Minister has said, it is a major obligation to get our natural resources to market sustainably.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a new poll released yesterday showed that the vast majority of Quebecers support transporting oil products via pipeline. Furthermore, 59% of Quebecers would rather purchase oil products originating in western Canada.

My question is very simple. Ontario, the Atlantic provinces, the western provinces, and Quebec all support the energy east project. Will the Prime Minister finally get behind it?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have had many opinions expressed in the House about pipelines. We have one over here, we have a second one there, and a third one over there. We have mayors who are weighing in. We have premiers who are weighing in. The only way we are going to get a process that carries credibility with Canadians is to ensure that they all have an opportunity to give their views and, ultimately, by looking at science-based evidence, indigenous knowledge, and a good process, the government will decide.

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago, Denis Coderre was not speaking for Quebeckers when he opposed energy east. According to a new poll, Quebeckers consider pipelines to be the safest means to transport oil. Fifty-nine per cent would prefer to buy their oil from western Canada.

The Atlantic, the west, Ontario, and now Quebec support energy east. Will the Prime Minister understand that and support that project for Canadians?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to learn that the members opposite see major resource projects as nation-building, as these should be, but the only way these are going to happen is if they carry the confidence of Canadians, not the failed process of the previous government that did not get one major pipeline built to tidewater while it was a majority government. Why would we want to follow a failed practice? We are going to follow a new one that has faith in the credibility and the judgment of Canadians.

* * *

*[Translation]***JUSTICE**

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of our young women continues to be a concern in Quebec. On Monday, the mother of a runaway personally handed a letter to the Prime Minister. She asked him to enforce the law against traffickers, a law that was passed here by all parties. Yesterday there was a cabinet meeting, but there is still no order in council. It is all very fine to talk about this, but what we need is action.

What is the minister waiting for to make it tougher for traffickers and to protect our young women? When will we see an order in council?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these young women and their families are in our thoughts and prayers. The disappearance of a child is a tragedy, especially in these circumstances. We are determined to achieve the important objectives of Bill C-452.

I can guarantee that we will quickly take action that is in keeping with our values and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

● (1500)

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, communities across the country are working hard to tackle this problem and so many other public safety challenges, but

despite all the talk from the previous government, police forces across the country still do not have the resources they need. To make matters worse, in 2013 the Conservatives cancelled the police officer recruitment fund. The NDP has consistently called for the restoration of this fund so that communities like Halifax, Montreal, Winnipeg, and Surrey have the police officers and the resources they need to keep their communities safe.

Will the Liberal government now restore the police officer recruitment fund?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman makes a specific reference to Surrey. I can assure him that the commitment made of the number of officers to be added to that detachment will be honoured by this spring, on target, as planned originally.

I will also tell him that our platform included a very useful suggestion for a new fund to work through the provinces and with local police forces across the country to combat the awful scourge of guns and gangs, and drugs. We are being very proactive on this file.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Prime Minister does not understand that Canada is an energy-rich country. He does not understand that Canada is an exporting country. He does not understand that oil is one of our biggest exports. He does not understand that those exports create jobs all across Canada.

Canada's international customers are waiting with open wallets to buy Canada's energy. They will buy as much as we can provide.

When will this Prime Minister get out of the way so that we can export more of our oil around the world, and create jobs here at home?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has said many times that one of the major responsibilities of the Government of Canada is to get our natural resources to market sustainably.

If we want to access these foreign markets, if we want to create more jobs in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador, the only way that will be done is if the Canadian people see that the process that takes us to a decision is a credible one, not like the failed process of the previous government.

* * *

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Bombardier is a huge employer in Canada, particularly in Quebec, and the minister's home city of Montreal.

Oral Questions

Yet the Minister of Transport has killed a major business opportunity for Bombardier. He overruled Toronto City Council and the Toronto Port Authority, and blocked expansion of the Toronto island airport.

Why will the Minister of Transport not let Bombardier create Canadian jobs by allowing the Toronto island airport to expand?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that everyone in this chamber, on both sides of the House, is delighted with the news today that Air Canada has decided to purchase 45 airplanes from the C-series 300 and has options for 30 more.

We care deeply about the Bombardier aircraft. I, myself, have had the pleasure of sitting in the cockpit. This is the best airplane in the world in its class, and all of us should be hoping that Bombardier is going to be selling hundreds of these aircraft in the months and years to come.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, provinces like Alberta have been hit hard by job losses and, as we have heard today, they are not going to get much help from the Liberal government.

There is absolutely no plan to get Canadians back to work. There is absolutely no support for energy east. What Albertans are asking this Liberal government for is a commitment to energy east, a commitment to improve employment insurance to ensure that Albertans who have lost their jobs can take care of their families and keep their homes.

In our biggest time of need, will the government stand up, support Albertans, and help them get back to work, instead of just saying, “Hey, hang in there”?

• (1505)

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has a priority. It wants to move our natural resources to market. The previous government was unable to move natural resources to tidewater, because it continued to follow a process that failed and that did not have the confidence of the Canadian people. Why would we want to repeat those mistakes?

Rather, we are embracing a process that reaches out to Canadians, that reaches out to indigenous communities to build confidence in the regulatory process, to meet our combined objective—

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle.

* * *

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. David Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in his mandate letter, the Prime Minister instructed the Minister of National Revenue to turn the Canada Revenue Agency into a client-focused institution.

The government must ensure that Canadian taxpayers are always treated with respect. That respect must permeate the way it interacts with citizens.

Can the minister tell us what she has done so far?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, I was pleased to announce improvements to Canada Revenue Agency correspondence to make tax information simpler and easier to understand. The content has been streamlined to include only the information most important to the taxpayer.

We will continue to consult with Canadians and draw on best practices to make sure our service improvements truly meet Canadians' needs.

* * *

[*English*]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Finance indicated that he would amend the territorial funding formula to take into account recent changes in the Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut.

As the minister well knows, western provinces have seen a sudden and dramatic drop in the price of oil and gas, however, the equalization formula does not allow these unexpected changes to be taken into account. This means that Saskatchewan is sending money to other provinces while its own resource economy is struggling.

Will the minister commit to treating Saskatchewan and Alberta fairly and address the problems in the equalization formula?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to answer this question. We were very pleased to deal with the situation in the northern territories over a couple of months of discussion. Statistics Canada changed its calculation method which left it in a difficult situation. We found a way to improve that situation.

Happily, what we have also done is found ways that we can help people in other provinces through the plan we put forward. We are going to be making real investments in the Canadian economy through investments in infrastructure, investments that will help people in the middle class and those most vulnerable. We believe that our plan has the best shot in improving our economy for all Canadians.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PENSIONS

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Broadbent Institute study released yesterday confirms that seniors' poverty rates are increasing.

Over the past 12 years, senior poverty has increased from 4% to 11%. Some 30% of single senior women are living below the poverty line.

Oral Questions

During the election campaign, the Liberals promised to increase the guaranteed income supplement by 10% right away, but yesterday's response from the Minister of Finance could not have been more vague.

The question is clear: will the government increase the guaranteed income supplement in the budget as promised in the election campaign?

[English]

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the course of our campaign, we talked about the importance of helping people to retire in dignity. We talked about the importance of helping those people who have already retired.

We are looking toward making significant progress on helping Canadians to retire in dignity over the course of this year through a CPP enhancement. We are also looking toward measures in budget 2016 that will help those Canadians who are currently retired and facing a difficult situation.

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in my riding of London North Centre, small businesses are central to the economy. Many small business owners tell me it is very difficult to be competitive as unlocking new markets to move their goods and services is not an easy task.

Would the Minister of International Trade be able to update the House on what is being done to ensure Canadian small businesses are given the necessary support required to take advantage of global export opportunities and create more quality jobs at home?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for London North Centre for his hard work on this file.

CanExport is a \$50 million five-year program that gives small- and medium-size companies the support they need to explore new export opportunities. We unveiled CanExport last month and it was with great pleasure that the hon. Minister of Small Business and I announced just last week that 29 companies have already been approved for funding.

This is a great program. I encourage all of us to get the small- and medium-size companies in our ridings from coast to coast to coast to apply. Let us—

• (1510)

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

* * *

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in his throne speech, the Prime Minister indicated that he would legalize and decriminalize marijuana. Law enforcement officials have since said that they do not have the tools they need to effectively deal with drug-impaired driving.

A device to quickly detect whether a driver has consumed drugs, like the one used to screen for alcohol, has not yet been approved in Canada.

Can the Minister of Public Safety explain what he intends to do to reassure our police forces and Canadian families, who are afraid that there will be more impaired drivers on our roads?

[English]

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes the importance of keeping our communities safe. We are absolutely committed to working with the House to ensure that law enforcement agencies across this country have the tools necessary to keep our communities safe. It is an important part of the work that we will be doing in the future as we go forward to make our communities safe and to protect our kids, through the legalization and regulation of marijuana.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

All of us in the House are proud of the progressive role Canada played in concluding the agreement in Paris last year. The Paris agreement will be open for signing at the United Nations headquarters this spring on Earth Day.

My question to the Prime Minister is twofold. Will he personally accept the invitation of the Secretary-General to be there to sign the agreement, and more importantly, will he bring with him Canada's new, more robust target to meet the objectives of the agreement?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to be in Paris with premiers and so many Canadians to reach that extraordinary agreement. I am looking forward to meeting with the premiers on March 3 to further build on this framework.

In direct answer to the member's question, Canada will be attending the signing ceremony in April in New York to move forward on this important landmark historic agreement out of Paris.

* * *

PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Tom Osborne, Speaker of the Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

The Speaker: I would like to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of George Elliott Clarke, the seventh parliamentary poet laureate.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Routine Proceedings

[English]

The Speaker: Finally, I would like to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the Right Honourable PJ Lakhampal who, through the Make-A-Wish Foundation, has been prime minister of Canada for a day.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I seek the consent of the House to table the following document: “Financial Monitor”, a Department of Finance publication, November 2015 issue.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: There is not unanimous consent.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1515)

[English]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a report on the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting its participation at the 12th Plenary Assembly at the Canadian Section of ParlAmericas in Panama City, Panama, September 4 to 5, 2015.

* * *

SAFE AND REGULATED SPORTS BETTING ACT

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-221, an act to amend the Criminal Code (sports betting).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley for seconding the motion because it is a very important Canadian province-by-province issue.

I am introducing this bill, which many members of the House will know passed through the chamber in the last session of Parliament and should be law today. However, it was stalled in the Senate, despite support by this very House.

The bill, the “Safe and Regulated Sports Betting Act”, would amend the Criminal Code by repealing one very small section, which would allow sports betting on single-wager sports events in our country by providing the provinces and territories with their choice as to whether they would like to make these changes and bring the option to market. Many provinces and municipalities have expressed support. Many private sector businesses, including chambers of commerce, Canadian labour councils, and tourism associations, would like to see these changes made.

We also know that the economic benefits from this bill would really stimulate the economy. A report back in 2011 concluded this change alone would generate about \$70 million in Windsor and \$35

million in Niagara Falls, and include hundreds of jobs, even more in spin-off activity in Canada-wide events.

Each province that chooses to amend its legislation could potentially benefit from this change.

Let us stop sending billions annually to organized crime through illegal sports wagering and, instead, put that money back into our social programs like health care, education, problem gambling, and infrastructure.

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

* * *

[Translation]

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-222, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (Canada-Barbados Income Tax Agreement).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to introduce a bill to amend the Income Tax Act in order to close tax loopholes that exist in Barbados, which is Canada's tax haven. Companies that generate profits there can repatriate those funds to Canada tax-free, even though that is not what is set out in the tax treaty.

The GDP of Barbados is roughly the same as that of my hometown, Joliette. On paper, however, Canadian companies invest three times more in Barbados than in France. For years now, the government has been saying that we need to wait for all countries around the world to take action before we tackle the problem. It says that nothing can be done through legislation. This bill proves that it is possible to take action through legislation. It sends a powerful message.

Finding the loophole in the maze made up of the act, the regulations, and the treaties was not easy. I want to thank everyone who helped me, including the experts I consulted and the groups that are calling for an end to tax havens. I also want to thank the legal officers of the House, who did a huge amount of work in very little time to draft this bill in impeccable legal form.

I am not suggesting that this bill solves everything. White collar criminals are very creative. However, by closing the loophole that exists in Barbados, this bill makes an important contribution to our efforts to create a fairer tax system.

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

* * *

● (1520)

[English]

PETITIONS

PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DYING

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from residents of North Okanagan—Shuswap regarding physician-assisted suicide.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to invoke the notwithstanding clause, continuing the ban on assisted suicide.

Government Orders

NATURAL RESOURCES

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

The first petition is from residents within Saanich—Gulf Islands. They call for a national moratorium on fracking. Fracked natural gas presents a much larger greenhouse gas footprint and threatens underground water supplies.

EXPERIMENTAL LAKES AREA

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from many hundreds of Canadians, whose signatures came in the last Parliament.

The petitioners call for the government to act to recognize the importance of the Experimental Lakes Area and to ensure funding for it. I hope that will be taken into account by the new government.

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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.

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**

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.) moved:

Motion No. 2

That the House support the government's decision to broaden, improve, and redefine our contribution to the effort to combat ISIL by better leveraging Canadian expertise while complementing the work of our coalition partners to ensure maximum effect, including:

(a) refocusing our military contribution by expanding the advise and assist mission of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) in Iraq, significantly increasing intelligence capabilities in Iraq and theatre-wide, deploying CAF medical personnel, offering to provide the Government of Iraq ministerial liaison personnel to the Ministries of Defence and the Interior, enhancing capacity-building efforts with our defence partners in Jordan and Lebanon to advance regional stability, and withdrawing our CF-18s while maintaining air force surveillance and refuelling capability;

(b) 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;

(c) investing significantly in humanitarian assistance while working with experienced humanitarian partners to support the basic needs of conflict-affected populations, including children and victims of sexual and gender-based violence;

(d) engaging more effectively with political leaders throughout the region, increasing Canada's contribution to international efforts aimed at finding political solutions to the crises affecting the region and reinforcing our diplomatic presence to facilitate the delivery of enhanced programming, supporting increased CAF deployments, strengthening dialogue with local and international partners on the ground and generally giving Canada a stronger voice in the region;

(e) welcoming tens of thousands of Syrian refugees to Canada;

that the House express its appreciation and pride to the members of the CAF, diplomatic and intelligence personnel for their participation in the fight against terrorism, to Canadian humanitarian workers for their efforts to provide critical support to conflict-affected populations, and reconfirm our commitment to our allies in the coalition against ISIL; and

that the House note the government's resolve to return to the House within two years with a new motion on Canada's contribution to the region.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin this debate with a statement of gratitude to the brave women and men of the Canadian Armed Forces and the many public servants who have offered, and will continue to offer, their service and dedication in the Middle East on behalf of all of us. I know I speak for every member in this House, and indeed for all Canadians, when I offer our deepest thanks for their valour, their courage, and their commitment both to their country and to the values that it stands for.

We also reiterate our sincere gratitude and sympathy to the family of Sergeant Andrew Doiron, who was killed in Iraq during a friendly fire incident last March. His service and his sacrifice remain in our minds as we reflect upon our continued engagement.

This government was elected with a commitment to refocus Canada's military contribution in Iraq and Syria on training local forces, providing more humanitarian support, and immediately welcoming 25,000 refugees from Syria to Canada.

● (1525)

[Translation]

This policy differed from that of the previous government, which advocated air strikes. It also differed from that of the previous official opposition, which advocated a complete lack of military involvement. This topic was the subject of debates across Canada during the campaign, especially among party leaders.

With this motion, I am reopening the debate in the House, which was elected by Canadians, and in moving this motion, the government is upholding its promise to Canadians.

When the last Parliament debated Canada's involvement in the Middle East, we put forward four clear principles to guide our decisions.

One, Canada has a role to play in confronting humanitarian crises in the world.

Two, when a government considers deploying our men and women in uniform, there must be a clear mission and a clear role for Canada.

Three, the case for deploying our forces must be made openly and transparently, based on clear and reliable, dispassionately presented facts.

Four, Canada's role must reflect the broad scope of Canadian capabilities and how best we can help.

[*English*]

We believe there is an important role for Canada to play in the fight against ISIL, a role that we can play, a role that we must play.

ISIL threatens peace and democracy with terror and barbarism. The images are horrific, the stories are appalling, the victims are many. ISIL fights against open and diverse societies where women and men of all faiths, all ethnicities, and all backgrounds are free to make of their lives what their capabilities, work ethic, and their dreams will allow. ISIL stands against everything that we value as Canadians, and poses a direct threat to our people and to our friends.

Our government understands the need for a sustained effort, working with our international partners, to enable local forces to defeat those terrorists.

Last week this government unveiled a clear, transparent and robust strategy for Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and the broader region. Ours is a comprehensive whole-of-government approach that has been informed by extensive consultation with our allies and civil society stakeholders.

Our approach covers several key areas: security, humanitarian assistance, development, and diplomacy.

On security, we will allocate more resources to train Iraqi security forces. Our goal is to allow local forces to take the fight directly to ISIL to reclaim their homes, land, and future.

In addition, we will continue supporting aerial surveillance and refuelling activities within the coalition. We will withdraw our six CF-18s and we will be more significantly involved in counter-terrorism measures and improving chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear security in the region.

• (1530)

[*Translation*]

When it comes to humanitarian assistance, we will continue to help the refugees most affected by the conflicts. We will deliver \$840 million in humanitarian assistance over the next three years to support basic needs in the hardest-hit regions, including drinking water, food, health care, and shelter.

When it comes to development, we will also provide \$270 million over the same time frame to build local capacity in communities and countries hosting large numbers of refugees. We will help our partners address basic needs in education, health care, and sanitation services, in repairing infrastructure, and in promoting economic growth.

Finally, Canada will enhance its diplomatic presence on the ground in Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon by increasing its engagement with local and international partners to restore stability in the region. In addition to all these measures, the Government of Canada has adopted a new policy to welcome Syrian refugees, quickly but safely, as new Canadians.

Since we took office, communities across Canada have welcomed more than 20,000 Syrian refugees who fled unimaginable chaos.

Government Orders

Others arrive daily. The extent to which Canadians have shown solidarity and offered their support to these newcomers is truly inspiring. This welcome is an absolutely essential aspect of the fight against the so-called Islamic State: bringing in men, women, and children who were driven from their homes and opening the doors to our communities in a caring and compassionate way. This approach truly represents the best of Canadians.

[*English*]

Canadians have been rightly outraged by the atrocities committed at the hands of ISIL. We must take action in a way that will deliver durable results on the ground to help restore peace and stability to this war-torn region.

Our renewed strategy for Canada's engagement in Iraq and Syria is robust, comprehensive and effective. By working closely with local communities and with our coalition partners, we will confront ISIL head-on, offer refuge to those fleeing chaos, and work with host nations to build real solutions for the longer term.

I look forward to an engaged, informed debate on this important issue.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Prime Minister for beginning his remarks by remembering Sergeant Andrew Doiron and the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces who act on the orders of this House. Whether the mission is as it was under the previous government or under this government, all members of the House respect the role they play for Canada.

My question relates to the mission. It is very similar to the mission the last government started, in that Canada has been one of the largest per capita aid donors. We have helped the dislocated and refugees. We are doing more of that. However, the third pillar, the military effort alongside our allies, is being changed.

Lester Pearson once said that whether Canadians fire a rifle in Korea or in Europe, they are protecting people at home themselves. The Prime Minister said today that ISIS is a direct threat to our people.

In light of the fact that air strikes over the last year have limited ISIS to 25% of the territory it once held, have cut it off, and weakened it, and if ISIS is a direct threat to Canadians, why would the Prime Minister stop the air attacks, stop taking the fight to ISIS, and withdraw the military effort?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question and for his work on the file addressing concerns around military and veteran issues.

The question we can agree on is not whether or not Canada must be part of the coalition in a robust way against ISIL. However, the question we are facing today, and indeed we faced during the election campaign, is how Canada can best help as a meaningful member of the coalition and contribute to slowing, stopping and eliminating ISIL?

Government Orders

The air strikes by our allies and by RCAF members have been effective in a measure of impact against ISIL. However, the question is always, what can Canada do that other countries cannot offer to the same degree?

We have developed a level of expertise in training local troops, earned through 10 long years in Afghanistan, that allows us to offer something that many of our allies are unable to offer. Indeed, tripling our contingent of trainers in the region is going to have a measurable and meaningful impact on the one thing that will ultimately defeat ISIL, which is local troops taking the fight directly to those people who have taken and invaded their homes, lands and communities.

• (1535)

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Prime Minister for brining this debate to the House. We all welcome the chance to talk about something that is so important and such a great threat to world peace and security.

If we are going to have a really good debate in this House and, as the Prime Minister said, talk about what it is that Canada can do that others cannot, we are going to be making the argument forcibly on this side that Canada could be providing a leadership role in cutting off the funding, the arms, and the flow of foreign fighters to ISIS. However, instead, the Prime Minister has left us wondering whether this is or is not a combat mission.

In question period yesterday, the Prime Minister compared this situation to World War I and World War II where we had very high Canadian casualties.

Does the Prime Minister have a casualty estimate for this new and much more dangerous role he has assigned to Canadians? That will tell us something about whether this is or is not a combat mission.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the fact is, we all agree that Canada must play a role against these terrorists. We must stand strong along with our coalition partners who, of the 65 different partners, all play very different roles.

One of the things that Canadians have said loud and clear to all of their elected representatives in this House is that they want Canada to be a force for good in the world. They want us to be effective at degrading people who are a threat to innocence, security and stability in the world.

The question we are debating right now is how best to do that. We feel that by engaging in a more robust training mission to empower local troops to effectively bring the opposition to ISIL on the ground while, yes, increasing our support for humanitarian and refugee work, and indeed working on counter-radicalization here at home, is part of the whole-of-government approach that this government worked very hard, in concert with our allies and key stakeholders, to bring forward to the House today.

We are pleased with the response that it has received, not just from our allies, not just from stakeholders around the world, but indeed from Canadians to this responsible, robust and comprehensive mission.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as his name was mentioned on the other side, the Nobel Peace Prize winner, the Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson, started Canada's role as a peacekeeping, not peacemaking, nation. Could the Prime Minister

explain how this mission is a peacekeeping mission rather than a peacemaking mission?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that has united Canadians in our almost 150-year history as an official country is the knowledge and understanding that we are lucky in this country to live in this extraordinary place. That luck comes with the responsibility to help to promote the values that we hold dear and to offer opportunity and stability, and security to people around the world.

Whether it was in direct combat engagements in the trenches of World War I or the beaches of World War II, whether it was through developing United Nations peacekeeping under the leadership of former Prime Minister Pearson, and ensuring that Canada has positive ways to play, or indeed, in the current NATO-led missions and coalition mission against the so-called Islamic State, Canada continues to understand that we have a role to play.

The question we are debating here in the House, and it is the right question that we be debating, is how best can Canada help? We have different perspectives. The members opposite in the official opposition feel that we should be going even harder on a direct combat mission. The members of the second opposition party feel that we should be disengaging from the military side of things.

On this side of the House, the government feels that the mission we have put forward, a whole-of-government approach that is focused on training, increasing intelligence capability, supporting and logistics and emphasizing humanitarian and refugee support, is the kind of way that Canada can best support our allies in the coalition, and protect and offer stability to innocents on the ground in the region.

• (1540)

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Prime Minister for opening up the debate today. I want to comment that in Iraq and Syria, there is no peace to keep. We have to destroy ISIS.

We do support a more robust training mission. We do support the humanitarian relief, the diplomatic and political solutions that are necessary, but the Prime Minister has yet to give us one single good reason why we cannot continue on with our CF-18s bombing ISIS.

We saw in reports just today that ISIS is on the run, its supply lines have been cut off, it has had to cut back on the amount of money it is paying its militia, terrorists, and bureaucrats, and it is running out of food. We have ISIS in a weakened position now, which means that the bombing missions have worked. We need to keep the CF-18s in theatre.

Other than his rhetoric and his comments from a couple of years ago, talking about whipping out our CF-18s and seeing how big they are, why does he not look at the reality of how good our pilots are with our CF-18s, how they have degraded and destroyed ISIS, and ultimately keep them in the fight to protect our troops on the ground?

Government Orders

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman that we do not have any troops on the ground in the front lines. Our troops are there to train and support. That is what we will be increasing in terms of our support to advise and assist local troops. Indeed, of the 65 coalition members engaged in the fight against ISIL, there is a handful of them who are responsible for air strikes.

Canada had a role in air strikes. We are choosing to end that role in air strikes, so that we can better focus on the next steps in the fight against ISIL, which means encouraging local folks on the ground to have the capacity to continue putting pressure on ISIL to restore their homes, their lands, and to degrade and defeat ISIL on the ground, which is what local troops ultimately will have to do.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to provide the response of the Conservative Party and of Her Majesty's official opposition to the motion before the House.

At the outset, let me say on behalf of all members of the Conservative caucus how proud we are of the men and women of the armed forces. I had the rare opportunity to go to Afghanistan to visit our troops and thank them in theatre. If I could, I would go today to do the same thing. We truly owe them everything we have in this country.

There are times in the life of a Parliament and in the history of the House when Providence calls upon us to lead it, lead by conviction, lead by a responsibility we collectively have to the Canadian people, and lead by fighting evil. Sadly, today is not a day of leadership.

The deployment or decision not to deploy our military involves the most solemn decision any government will ever face: the decision to put the brave men and women who wear our country's uniform in harm's way. It is also a decision that reflects and projects to the rest of the world our most fundamental values. That is why it is important that members of the House have the opportunity to debate the future of the mission, an example set by the previous Conservative government. At its heart, today's motion runs counter to the clearly expressed will of a significant majority of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

We know that the decision to pull our CF-18s from the fight against the Islamic State, to blunt the sharp end of our spear, is not in keeping with the contributions of our allies. We know, too, thanks to poll after poll, that it is not what most Canadians want us to do.

[*English*]

As I watched the Prime Minister announce the end of Canada's air combat mission against ISIL, I was struck by the incoherence of the Liberal government's plan. While I applaud the commitment to continue diplomacy and development, I question how such goals can be achieved without basic peace and security for the people of Iraq and Syria. More fundamentally, I question how Canada can continue to claim to be a major partner in the fight against ISIL when it is eliminating the very contribution that most directly protects innocent civilians suffering on the ground.

Operation Impact was launched to help to stop ISIL from taking more territory and to destroy whatever capabilities it had built up. Bombing runs by Canadian fighter jets have provided vital cover for

those battling ISIL on the ground. The Kurdish government, whose forces have been most effective in retaking ground from ISIL, has repeatedly requested that Canada's bombing activities continue. In light of this record, I am forced to ask why we have fighter aircraft at all, if not for the purpose of protecting innocent civilians from clear and present danger. If not this mission, then which mission?

The Liberals fundamentally misunderstand the nature of terrorism. It is not simple thuggery or even organized criminality, as recently alleged by the Minister of National Defence. Terror, the likes of which we saw in Paris last fall, is designed to undermine civilization and legitimate systems of government. It has at its aim the destruction of democracy and of the equal treatment of citizens, and the replacement of these values with a brutal and hierarchical system of control, including the sexual enslavement of women and children and the murder of religious minorities and gays and lesbians. This is an ideology worth fighting with every tool at our disposal.

Our international partners asked us to stay in the air combat mission. The victims of ISIL on the ground in Iraq and Syria asked us to continue to provide the air cover they desperately need to have a chance at survival, and our own people, including many Canadians who voted for the Liberal government, want our CF-18s to continue to take the fight to ISIL.

In reality, even with the announcement, not a single person has been able to explain why our CF-18s must be removed from the air campaign. We as Canadians are rightly appalled by the depravity of ISIL. The shadow of this so-called caliphate has descended over millions of people in large parts of Syria and Iraq, and under the shadow, people suffer, literally, a reign of terror.

● (1545)

ISIS has revolutionized the use of torture, mutilation, and murder as a means of oppression, an instrument of terror and a medium for propaganda. Those who run afoul of its oppressive rules, or simply do not share its perverse world view, are stoned, beheaded, burned alive, or crucified. The punishment for being gay is being hurled off the roof of a building.

ISIS also sends child soldiers into battle and trains other children to execute their prisoners. They revel in rape as a weapon of war. Some girls and young women are forced to marry ISIS fighters. Others get sold as sex slaves. Preteens are the most expensive, going for \$165.

Their soldiers have reportedly turned chemical weapons on civilians.

They have slaughtered and dispossessed many thousands of innocents for the crime of belonging to ethnic or religious minorities, whether it is Yazidis, Christians, Turkmen, Shia, Shabak, the list of their victims go on and on.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Canadians are deeply committed to religious freedom both here at home and around the world. It is a fundamental Canadian value and it has no greater enemy in the world than ISIS. Since the Prime Minister loves to speak of diversity, we should note here that there is no hatred of diversity in the world deeper than the hatred at the dark heart of ISIS.

[English]

For us here in Canada, this is the stuff of nightmares, but for the people suffering under the boot of ISIS, it is what they live with every day and it is what has led to the exodus of millions of Iraqis and Syrians from the region.

Let us be clear. These terrorists are not mere thugs, as the Prime Minister has suggested, or simply a criminal organization as the Minister of National Defence has claimed. They are a death cult that has declared war on the civilized world, and the world, Canada included, has responded. More than 60 nations, including Canada's traditional friends and allies, are currently taking part in the U.S.-led coalition to degrade and destroy ISIS through air strikes.

Our CF-18s have now flown nearly 250 bombing missions, destroying ISIS troops, equipment, bomb factories, and fortifications. They have taken part in the liberation of substantial numbers of innocent men, women, and children. In fact, Canada is the coalition's fifth-largest contributor.

As of February 3, the Royal Canadian Air Force CF-18 aircraft had eliminated more than 300 ISIL targets. Our air strikes have been focused around major cities, such as Mosul, Sinjar, and Ramadi and have been extremely helpful in liberating roughly 20% to 25% of the populated areas of Iraq that were previously controlled by ISIL.

Canada's contributions to the air mission, both practically and symbolically, are unquestionably important. In mid-December, Canadian special forces trainers were involved in a day-long surprise attack from ISIS. Canadians laid down supporting fire with the Kurdish peshmerga. In that very attack, Canadian CF-18s were called on to provide air cover. Yet, in a statement from the Minister of National Defence about this issue, he did not even mention the fact that Canadian CF-18s were involved in that heroic effort.

The government talks about openness and transparency, but on this issue it is just talk. The fact is that if we remove our CF-18s from this fight, we will have to rely on others in future similar situations. And why would we leave the fighting to others? Why would we leave the heavy lifting to others? Canada has always stepped up when needed.

To say that our air strikes have had little effect, as the government has repeated time and time again, is an insult to our air force's heroic efforts as its personnel put their lives on the line for us each and every day. To suggest other nations can do their job better than they can is also an insult to Canada's proud history of taking the fight to the enemy. But equally important as the missions our pilots have flown is the statement that we should make with their presence, that we stand united with our allies and the rest of the civilized world, united against the savagery of ISIS, united in support of the suffering people in the region.

● (1550)

By pulling our CF-18s out of this fight, our government wants to send a different message, that this is not our fight. However, it is our fight. When human dignity and human rights are trampled in the world, it is our fight.

The message being sent is the opposite of "Canada is back". The message is Canada is stepping back from the fight against terror. There can be no other interpretation. The Prime Minister and his cabinet have yet to offer any acceptable reason why the air mission should not continue, no strategic position, no moral imperative, no rational argument whatsoever. Instead, all we have received from them is complete and total incoherence. The truth is that his pulling out our CF-18s means that our fighting days against ISIS are over. Training, humanitarian efforts, and diplomacy are all important, and we support them, but they are not fighting.

When it comes to our security, fighting ISIL is the most urgent priority for every government and it should be the most urgent priority for this government. Instead, we have total incoherence from the Liberal Party.

[Translation]

There is no reason why we cannot increase our ongoing and long-running humanitarian and diplomatic efforts in the region and our training of local troops on the ground, as the government says it will do, while continuing to bomb the enemy and halt their progress.

[English]

These are not contradictory measures. Indeed, they are complementary measures. In fact, President Obama himself has said to the American people that air strikes are a key pillar of the coalition strategy in fighting ISIS, along with humanitarian intervention and military training.

Sadly, the government is making such a monumental decision for the purpose simply of fulfilling an election promise. This is clearly an ideological and political decision, that to the government the atrocities that ISIS commits against innocent people do not warrant a direct military response from the air. This is disappointing for a number of reasons, but remember this is the same Prime Minister who called our CF-18s, "CF-15s".

I say to the Prime Minister and the people around him, military missions where we put people's lives on the line are not jokes, they are not an opportunity for throwaway lines, and they are not an opportunity to try to score political points.

Therefore, we are going to continue to ask the tough questions about the government's plan on behalf of Canadians. That is why we have to ask, again and again, is this not a fight worth fighting for?

There are many clear and worthy reasons for Canada to continue the fight. First, we should stand up for the people in the region. The people whom ISIS is oppressing cannot fight back alone. The training we are doing and will continue to do is valuable, but it is not enough. We must fight by their side and in the air. We must fight this evil head-on.

Second, we should stand alongside our friends and our allies. Whenever the free nations of the world have confronted tyranny and oppression, Canada has been at the fore. From Vimy Ridge to the beaches of Normandy, from Kapyong to the Medak Pocket, from the Persian Gulf to the Panjwai district, when the cause is just, Canadians have never turned away.

Third, the government should stand up for Canadians. It has been said so many times that I am surprised I need to repeat it: ISIS is dedicated to the destruction of all that we hold dear. By taking the fight to the enemy there, we are protecting Canadians here at home. This point seems to have been lost on the government. Indeed, it does not talk about it at all.

Fourth, we should stand up for our values. In the words of one of Canada's great Prime Ministers, Sir Robert Borden, Canada fights "Not for love of battle, not for lust of conquest, not for greed of possessions, but for the cause of honour, to maintain solemn pledges, to uphold principles of liberty". They were powerful words in 1914, and they ring just as true a century later.

For Canada to abandon our air combat role against ISIS is a betrayal of the people of Syria and Iraq. It is a betrayal of our closest friends and allies. It is a betrayal of generations of our proud Canadian military history. It is a betrayal of the government's highest purpose, ensuring the security of Canada and the safety of Canadians.

• (1555)

While ISIS thrives, no one is entirely safe from its cruelty. That is why our allies have redoubled their efforts to bring this horror to heel with more air strikes. They have stepped up while we are now stepping back.

The fight against global terrorism is the fight of our generation, and we turn away from it with shame. It is not enough for the Prime Minister to just talk about values, about freedom and democracy, about diversity, human dignity, and human rights. We have to defend them, and where they are threatened we must defend them. If we do not, then they are nothing more than just words in this chamber.

This is why Her Majesty's loyal opposition cannot support the motion. It represents a retreat from the fight, a willingness to let our friends and allies do the heavy lifting in the name of those values. It is unworthy of our great country that we all love. I encourage my colleagues in all parties to vote against it.

That is also why I will move the following amendment. I move:

That the motion be amended by replacing all the words after the words "That the House" with the following:

(a) urge the government to re-establish Canada's influence within the international decision-making process in the fight against terrorism and rebuild the trust Canada has lost with its allies by reversing its decision to withdraw CF-18s from the air combat mission, which essentially removes Canada from any combat role,

Government Orders

(b) ensure Canadian humanitarian relief does not directly or indirectly support jihadi terrorism, and

(c) express its appreciation and pride to all members of the Canadian Armed Forces, and in particular, Special Operation Forces and the RCAF members in the Air Task Force, including CF-18 pilots, and thank them for their extraordinary efforts in the fight against terrorism and for protecting Canadians at home.

• (1600)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Everything seems to be in order.

Questions and comments.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we are having a robust debate, even though I have to admit I do not agree with everything the member pointed out.

I found one of the comments the member made particularly interesting. When she talked about the fact that Canada has been engaged from Vimy Ridge to Afghanistan and many places in between, she used the quote, "...when the cause is just, Canadians have never turned away". We can all agree with that nice sentiment.

Does the member disagree with the former leader of the Conservative Party, who felt that in 2003 George W. Bush's invasion of Afghanistan was a just cause? Does she therefore feel that it was not a just cause? Canada should always step up and needs to step up in the right way, and that is what we are arguing right here. Does she feel that 2003 was a just cause or, as she just said, was it not a just cause?

Hon. Rona Ambrose: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Prime Minister for his question. I kind of like this. I am hoping in the next four years there will be more questions from him for this side of the House.

I want to thank the Prime Minister for his speech as well. At the end of the day, I disagree with him. When he talks about Canada's proud military history, as I referenced in my speech, I hope he recognizes that whenever we were called upon to defend those very values that we hold so dear in this country—and he speaks of them and about his passion for diversity—and when we think about religious minorities and the rights of women around this world, there is no enemy right now in this world that threatens our diversity, our way of life, and our values more than the Islamic State.

We are called upon today by our allies and by the people on the ground suffering in Iraq and Syria to continue to fight ISIS. The Prime Minister continues to say we are taking the fight, but we are not anymore. When they pull out of the combat part, they are not taking the fight. They cannot say they are fighting when they are not fighting anymore. There is no fight in this plan.

We have said we support all the components. We support diplomatic efforts. We support political efforts. We support humanitarian efforts. All those things were being done, but we were also fighting, and we should be part of the fight. Now we are out because of him.

Government Orders

• (1605)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the Leader of the Opposition's speech, especially when she said that she supports humanitarian efforts. Unfortunately, the Conservative government sometimes gave us conflicting messages about humanitarian efforts.

Humanitarian assistance is based on three fundamental principles: neutrality, independence, and impartiality.

Does the hon. Leader of the Opposition agree that we must not confuse humanitarian assistance with military intervention?

[*English*]

Hon. Rona Ambrose: Mr. Speaker, I also am proud of the fact that over many decades Canada has always been—and was under the previous government—one of the biggest humanitarian donors to the crisis in Iraq and Syria. I applaud the government for continuing on with its humanitarian efforts, just as we were a large contributor under the previous government. However, it is not enough.

Every one of our allies has asked us to step up the fight against ISIS. The Prime Minister can talk about all of the lovely things that came out of the White House after his announcement, but the reality is that, weeks before that, those in the U.S. administration, those in France, and those in the U.K. came forward and asked everyone to step up their efforts in the air strikes.

The point was made that we have to step up our humanitarian efforts and the work on a potential peace accord, but the point was also made that there is absolutely no peace to keep and people are suffering on the ground. Millions of Iraqis and Syrians are fleeing the region. They are arriving here in Canada, and we welcome them, but they are leaving their homes and they will never be able to go back until there is peace. There is no peace to keep, and that means, at this point, the short-term goal of the coalition is to degrade and defeat ISIS and push it back out of the territory where it is wreaking havoc and a reign of terror over civilians. That is what air strikes do. That is exactly what military action is about. We are not part of it anymore. We are not part of the fight against ISIS.

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I very sincerely want to thank the leader of the Conservative Party for eloquently laying out our party's position on the need to fight this terrible menace that exists in the Middle East and has reached all across the world.

My hon. colleague sat in government around the cabinet table. She knows how difficult these types of decisions can be. She knows what is involved on the ground and in the air when we commit to engaging in these types of operations. What we heard from the Prime Minister were some good words about humanitarian relief and some direction of training, but not doing some of the hard work that Canada had been doing before.

I would like to ask this for my hon. colleague and leader of the Conservative Party. What if every leader of the countries involved in the fight against ISIS took the attitude of the Prime Minister? What if every head of state and every head of government that is currently fighting against ISIS took the direction of the Prime Minister, and none of them engaged in actual combat? What would the

humanitarian relief look like? What would the diplomatic engagement look like if every single country backed out of the fight against ISIS, taking the same direction as the Prime Minister has done?

Hon. Rona Ambrose: Mr. Speaker, the member's question is a good one because it goes to the very heart of the ideological decision that the Prime Minister is making, and luckily for him. The ideology here is that we will not fight; Canadians do not fight. He thinks those are Canadian values. I dispute that. I dispute that vigorously. However, that is his ideology.

Therefore, now, we are out of the fight against ISIS, the fight of our generation. This is the fight of our generation, and we are no longer in it. Imagine.

All of our allies were so polite when they said, "Oh, that's all right. We understand, Canada". Of course, they were polite. They are our friends. However, imagine if every one of the coalition partners decided to walk away as we did and there was no more bombing, no more air strikes, and no more air cover for the men and women on the ground doing the training, the men and women on the ground fighting, trying desperately to help the men, women, and children who are fleeing from this terror. Imagine that we would all just walk away.

We are so lucky that we have coalition partners in France who will cover for us. That is what they are doing. They are covering for us. They are doing the heavy lifting that the government is unwilling to do. It is shameful.

• (1610)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to suggest another response to the Leader of the Opposition, a much better response to the excellent question put forward by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

If all heads of government had the same attitude as our Prime Minister, the fight against this horrible terrorist group would be even more effective. The Prime Minister's goal is to ensure that Canada's contribution within a coalition of 65 countries is as effective as possible.

The vast majority of experts agree that the coalition of 65 countries is not lacking in strength when it comes to air strikes. What it really needs is on-the-ground training capacity. What it desperately lacks is humanitarian assistance, long-term development assistance, consolidation, and resources to combat terrorist propaganda. Those things are what the coalition needs, and that is what Canada is going to contribute more than ever before. That is why our plan has been welcomed by our allies; the official opposition should also get behind it.

[*English*]

Hon. Rona Ambrose: Mr. Speaker, I would like the member to name just one ally that, before this decision the Prime Minister made, called up and said, "Do you know what? Stop the air strikes".

Just name one coalition partner that said, “You know what, Canada? You've got the best pilots in the world, but do you know what? Go home. Pull out your CF-18s and stop helping us halt the advances and the progression of ISIS”.

I would love to hear who said that, because do members know what? They did not. They are polite. Of course they are polite. They are our friends. However, we have let down our friends.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the Prime Minister for following precedent and bringing this important issue to the House of Commons for debate and a vote.

Almost a year ago, the previous government asked this chamber to debate an extension of Canada's military combat mission in Iraq.

I want to reiterate now something I said then.

Approving a motion that asks our brave women and men in uniform to risk their lives overseas is the most important decision we can make. It is a responsibility we undertake with the utmost seriousness and with the greatest respect for those who serve our country. We owe them, and their families, a respectful debate and careful consideration of the issues before us.

[*Translation*]

The threat that Daesh poses to global peace and security and the atrocities it has been committing against civilians cannot be underestimated. Its despicable acts have displaced 2.5 million civilians in Iraq alone. Because of Daesh, over five million people need humanitarian assistance today. That terrorist group has killed thousands of people, many of them brutally slaughtered in unimaginable ways.

The New Democrats have long said that Canada has an important role to play in eliminating this threat, this scourge. We firmly believe that Canada can and must do more to alleviate the suffering of the civilians caught in the middle of this conflict. In fact, we have said repeatedly that first and foremost, Canada needs to block the terrorist group's access to weapons, funds, and foreign fighters. Unfortunately, the current plan does not do any of that. The Liberal plan proposes prolonging a front-line combat mission, and no one knows for how long, while offering no answers to some key questions. To be very clear, this is definitely a combat mission.

●(1615)

[*English*]

While we agree that Canada can be more effective in addressing the threat posed by ISIS, let us be clear about what the Prime Minister is proposing. This is indeed an expansion and an enlargement of Canada's military mission in Iraq, and it is also clearly a combat mission.

During the election, the Liberals promised Canadians that they would end the Conservative government's mission. They said that we “need a clearer line between combat and non combat”. Canadians have had a good example of the lack of clarity over the past couple of days. Every time we have asked the Prime Minister whether this is a combat mission, he has twisted, turned, and done everything he could to avoid even using the word. However, the reality is that their new mission actually blurs these lines even more.

Government Orders

By replacing planes in the sky with boots on the ground, the government is placing Canadian Forces personnel deeper into front-line combat. The Liberals are planning to triple the size of Canada's train, advise and assist mission. However, let us be clear. This is not classroom training. We already know that Canadian Forces involved in training have ended up exchanging fire with ISIS militants on the front lines.

What exactly will this tripling of training mean for Canadian Forces? What proportion of our troops will be on the front lines? When and with what caveats? Will Canadians continue painting targets for coalition bombing? What kind of transport will we be doing in theatre? How will the weapons we provide to Kurdish forces be tracked and their use monitored? Does our training include human rights and international law components? When will our participation end? Critically, what does success look like for this mission? What is the end game? These and many more questions remain unanswered, but last week, the chief of the defence staff was clear about one thing, there will be more risk to Canadian soldiers under this new mandate.

[*Translation*]

The Chief of the Defence Staff, General Vance, said that putting more people on the ground in a dangerous place is “riskier overall”. Those were his words.

We can also refer to the government's own backgrounder on this important issue. The government's backgrounder says that training will take place in a battlefield context. That is right. The government's own backgrounder says, and I quote, “in a battlefield context”.

It also says that the mission will examine ways to enhance in-theatre tactical transport.

Last year, the tragic death of Sergeant Doiron reminded us all of the serious risk involved in this kind of on-the-ground training mission. Less than a year ago, when the current Prime Minister was on the opposition benches, he said, and I quote:

...when we deploy the Canadian Forces, especially into combat operations, there must be a clear mission and a clear role for Canada.

Here is something else he said when he was in opposition:

The government wants to increase Canada's participation in a vague and possibly endless combat mission. We cannot support this proposal.

That is what he said when he was in opposition, but now that he is in power, he is making the same mistakes. That is exactly what the Prime Minister is telling us today.

Just like the bombing mission, this mission is a de facto combat mission, one that does not have an end date and fewer criteria for establishing what constitutes success and, therefore, the end of the mission. The Prime Minister is proposing a never-ending mission, which is exactly what he criticized last year.

Government Orders

If the members of the House recall, this mission began with a few dozen soldiers providing training. Oddly enough it resembles the start of Canada's involvement in Afghanistan. The Liberals are asking the House to give them a blank cheque with respect to a mission that has not been authorized by either the United Nations or NATO and that has no exit strategy.

We obviously do not agree with that. What is interesting, and this needs to be pointed out, is that one year ago the Liberals said that they too did not agree with that.

• (1620)

[*English*]

We cannot agree to this new expanded combat mission, but there is another way forward. When it comes to the fight against ISIS, it is simply not enough to say that we have to do something. We need to ask ourselves what the right thing to do is, and what is the most effective thing that Canada can do.

First, Canada should lead efforts to prevent the flow of weapons and resources to ISIS, starting by signing and ratifying the Arms Trade Treaty, which is another thing the Liberals have promised but still have not done. If fully implemented, the treaty will deprive some of the world's most brutal actors of access to weapons. Canada remains, sadly, the only member of NATO not to have signed the Arms Trade Treaty, and we in the NDP find this totally unacceptable.

Second, Canada should partner with domestic faith communities to counter radicalization, which we all know is a primary source of foreign fighters going to join Daesh. We can and should lead the way in developing a strong campaign of counter-extremist messaging, exposing the brutality of ISIS, and the utter lack of any religious basis for its atrocities. ISIS is not Islam.

Many of our allies have recognized the need for a comprehensive approach to countering and discouraging radicalization at the community level: the United States, France, and Germany to name a few. Municipalities are even acting. Montreal now has an effective model. Here at home we have also seen families of young people who have been radicalized and left to fight in Syria pleading for this kind of help from government.

In addition to Bill C-51's attack on our rights and freedoms, it utterly failed to respond to the need for a Canadian de-radicalization strategy. The Liberals made the unforgivable error of supporting Bill C-51 at the time, but they must not compound that mistake by failing to address radicalization now.

Third, Canada must also step up our role in the fight against terrorist financing. In Turkey last November, the Prime Minister signed a joint G20 statement committing Canada to tackling "the financing channels of terrorism". Yet the fact remains that between 2001 and 2015, Canada has had only one single successful conviction for terrorist financing. More needs to be done here at home and with our international partners to cut off the supply of oil funds that ISIS relies on to fund its terrorist activities.

Finally, and most important, we must continue to do more to increase humanitarian support for millions of civilians who are now victims in this conflict. From the beginning, the New Democrats have urged the government to boost aid in the broader region where

there would be an immediate life-saving impact. Our NATO ally, Turkey, has repeatedly asked Canada to do more to help the millions of refugees flooding its borders. We should also be assisting in areas of Canadian expertise, like combatting sexual violence, protecting minorities, reintegration, and helping to investigate and prosecute war crimes.

• (1625)

[*Translation*]

Last month, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Iraq underscored the importance of providing support for the Iraqi government's reconstruction and stabilization efforts in regions liberated from Daesh. The priority is to rebuild these communities so that civilians can return in safety and with dignity. This will also have long-term benefits.

It is a tragedy that the previous government missed the opportunity to recognize the importance of strengthening institutions, developing democracy and giving priority to humanitarian aid in order to save lives in Iraq and the region.

It is important that the Prime Minister is undertaking to invest in humanitarian aid, but it is also important that the humanitarian aid and military objectives remain separate in order to ensure the safety of humanitarian workers on the ground.

Finally, we cannot overlook the broader context of this conflict. Ignoring the broader context would be a terrible mistake. Daesh managed to set up in Iraq and Syria precisely because those countries do not have stable, well-established governments that can maintain peace and security. In Syria, the UN's fragile ceasefire reached on February 12 to allow humanitarian workers to reach the most vulnerable is in jeopardy because of the Russian bombing in support of the bloodthirsty dictator Bashar al-Assad. In the meantime, nearly 19,000 Iraqi civilians were killed in 21 months. That is why we believe that Canada should put all its diplomatic, humanitarian, and financial resources into trying to establish lasting peace in the region.

[*English*]

The overwhelming human tragedy unfolding on the ground will not be solved by force alone. It also demands that Canada put forward a comprehensive multi-faceted intervention that clearly defines success.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently said, "Over the longer-term, the biggest threat to terrorists is not the power of missiles – it is the [power] of inclusion." That is Canada's strength. That is why we in the NDP cannot support the Liberal's expanded military combat mission in Iraq.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was very happy to hear my hon. colleague talk about what defines "mission success" and "mission failure".

Government Orders

We have to know that in conflicts in Iraq and in Libya, those countries both fell into chaos and fell under the control of extremist organizations like ISIL. They did so precisely because there was no follow-on plan. What will happen after the combat mission? It is an excellent question. Now we need to understand. If Canada takes on this leadership role of forcing the coalition to look at the follow-on phases, perhaps we can prevent the same tragedy that happened in Iraq and Libya from happening again.

I appreciate the opportunity to talk about mission success, but I also want us to learn about other mission failures. Canada can help prevent that from happening a third time.

● (1630)

Hon. Thomas Mulcair: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is arguing my case for me. What she has just pointed out is that it is essential to define what a successful mission looks like. We must have an exit strategy. We have to say what the purpose of the mission is. She points to previous failures to define a successful mission. However, what we have just demonstrated is that the Liberal plan does not define success. Therefore, instead of defining why she is right, she has just managed to prove why the Liberals are in fact wrong. That is why we are voting against the Liberal extended combat mission in Iraq.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier today our Prime Minister stood in the House and said that we know our forces are in a risky situation. We have a duty to our men and women who put their lives on the line for all of us every day. We have a duty to remember and honour their sacrifices every day. I am one who believes that we should be honouring that not just once a year as we do on Remembrance Day, but every day throughout the year.

We have a duty to ensure our men and women stand for everything that Canada represents, those who put their lives in danger. We have a duty in this House to ensure they come home.

The hon. member for Kanata—Carleton said mission success or mission failure, what are the parameters that define that. What can define that is unnecessary loss of Canadian lives or Allied lives. If we are putting our forces in the line of fire, we want to ensure that they have every tool to be effective and ensure that they come home safely.

Does the hon. member not believe that we should be making sure that our forces should have access to all tools to ensure they come home safely?

Hon. Thomas Mulcair: Mr. Speaker, we share the concern of the member for Cariboo—Prince George that there could be unnecessary loss of life. We already saw the tragic case of Sergeant Andrew Doiron, who was indeed on the front lines in the previous Conservative combat mission. Tripling the number of people doing the exact same work, as General Vance has said, simply increases the risk that there will be other unnecessary losses of life.

I said at the beginning of my intervention today that I do think that this is the most serious thing we can do as members of Parliament, to decide to put our brave women and men in uniform in harm's way. That is why any time we take the decision to put them into combat, we have the obligation to make sure they have the best tools possible.

I would also add that we have the obligation to take care of our brave women and men in uniform when they return from combat. When the Conservatives were very recently in power, they shut down nine Veterans Affairs offices across the country, depriving those brave women and men of the aid they were entitled to when they came back to Canada.

He also used the expression, "line of fire", and I think that represents what we are concerned with here. We are indeed talking about troops involved in combat. The wordplay from members on the other side only makes us more skeptical about what is actually involved. They are doing everything they can to avoid the obvious, which is that this is indeed a combat mission.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my friend from Outremont. I listened to the speech of the Prime Minister and he said that Canada must not be involved in these bombing missions. We will point out the targets and do everything but press the button on the bombing missions, but heaven forbid Canada actually does that. That is his response.

The Conservative leader's response was to state several times a minute, Canada needs to fight more, fight more, fight more, without any clear definition from either leader as to what success would be or what the exit strategy would be.

We have seen time and again for countries and leaders too eager to fight or too unwilling to make the fight and actually declare it as a combat mission, that the leaving of the theatre, the exiting of that war is more difficult than the entering of that war.

I am wondering if my colleague would be able to either define or understand what possible answer is coming from either the Liberals or the Conservatives on this important question. If we are to support our troops in the most fulsome sense of the word, we must also be able to support them and give them a clear indication of what the exit will look like, and how we will know when that exit begins, because the definition of success has been made public here in this House of Commons.

● (1635)

Hon. Thomas Mulcair: Mr. Speaker, I think my friend and colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley is quite right to remind Canadians that under the Conservatives we had people on the front line. That was proven by the tragic death of Sergeant Doiron.

I asked the Prime Minister at the time, several times here in this House, whether or not those Canadian troops were painting targets for air strikes. It took everything to get it out of them. We learned that we were not doing that at the time, but it turned out that they were painting targets for air strikes, our own later on and those of our allies.

That is clearly, by anyone's definition of it, combat. That is what we will continue to do here. By any definition, that is a combat mission.

[*Translation*]

Let us call a spade a spade.

[*English*]

You have to call things by their name.

Government Orders

If Liberals are refusing to state the obvious, which is having people on the front lines involved in firefights with ISIS and painting targets for air strikes, if they refuse to acknowledge that is combat, then they are not being clear, transparent, and honest with our military, they are not being clear, transparent, and honest with the families of our military, and they are not being clear, transparent, and honest with Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the leader of the second opposition party for his speech. He will get two answers.

First, success means that the coalition manages to eradicate this so-called Islamic State and stabilize the region enough so that this group does not rise from its ashes. That is what success means.

Now, who has to engage in combat? In Iraq, it is the Iraqis who have to fight to liberate their country. However, they need training in order to be able to do that. Training is not just provided in the comfort of a school, it is provided on the ground. Our troops may find themselves in a position where they have to defend themselves to save their lives. Those are the rules of engagement recognized by international law.

What problem does my colleague have with that?

Hon. Thomas Mulcair: Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a stubborn refusal to call things by their name. The only way to honour our military commitment, at any level, is to be clear and honest.

This is a combat mission. My colleague just said that success involves nothing less than eradication. This involves putting Canadian soldiers on the front lines for several years.

When the troops come under heavy fire from the enemy, when they respond with their weapons and seek targets for air strikes while they are on the front lines, that is called a combat mission. The Liberals' refusal to clearly admit what is obvious to all Canadians says a lot about their ability to continue to hide the truth, just like the Conservative government. That is shameful.

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Joliette, Foreign Investments; the hon. member for Abbotsford, The Environment.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on February 8, the Prime Minister set out the plan for how Canada will be more effective in the fight against this despicable terrorist group ISIL, the so-called Islamic State. In doing so, the Prime Minister made the most difficult decision any leader or any government must make: the decision to put some of our fellow citizens in harm's way. Yes, they are well trained and they are brave, but it is still a huge decision to send Canadians into danger. We took this decision because it is necessary.

At stake is Canada's own national interest. We know from tragic recent experience that even in regions far from our own, the repercussions of conflict reach Canadians at home and abroad. Besides, Canadians care about other people. They care about the

countless families that have been torn apart. There are hundreds of thousands of people who are fleeing their homes, their regions, and Canadians care about those who remain and live in constant fear.

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

Terrorism knows no borders. That is why it is in Canada's best interests to participate, with its allies, in eradicating the epicentre of the self-proclaimed Islamic State terrorist group. This group represents a real threat to our security and espouses a diabolical view of the world that promises young people salvation if they massacre men, women, and children as brutally as possible.

To be effective, we need to develop the best possible plan for immediate, sustainable action. For our actions to have a chance of making a sustainable difference, we, as Canadians, must provide assistance to a part of the world that has become terribly destabilized. We have developed a plan that will make Canada more effective with its allies in eradicating the so-called Islamic State and in stabilizing the region in the long term. We will be better equipped to combat terrorism today and to prevent it from coming back in the future.

In order to be as effective as possible, this plan must take into account the fact that we are not fighting the so-called Islamic State alone. Canada is part of a coalition of 65 countries, led by the United States. We must make our best possible contribution to this coalition, and that is the crux of this debate: how can we best contribute to the coalition? That is what the Prime Minister, the Minister of National Defence, the Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, and I have been focusing on these past few weeks.

We worked with our allies and we assessed our capabilities in order to redirect Canada's effort in such a manner as to achieve the best short-term and long-term results. Yes, our six F-18s will no longer be used for air strikes. There is no doubt that our pilots, our air force, did an admirable job and we should be proud of them, but most experts agree that the coalition has no shortage of air bombers.

[*English*]

As General Vance said last week, it is very clear that this is an absolutely correct moment to be ceasing the direct air strikes. We are growing our commitment and putting the trainers on the ground that will achieve the critical path necessary beyond air strikes against ISIL.

As a spokesperson from the United States operation has said, "we've got enough bombers...but we can't lose sight of the fact that we have to train this Iraqi security force. This Iraqi army needs to be trained".

Government Orders

[Translation]

Those words are very true. There is an obvious lack of training for local combatants, and that is an essential need. There is an urgent need for humanitarian aid and an ongoing need for more long-term development assistance. It is based on those needs that we developed a plan that draws on more areas of Canadian expertise. We are nearly tripling the commitment to the training mission and doubling our intelligence capacity. We are strengthening our diplomatic presence, maintaining aerial surveillance and refuelling services, providing medical assistance, and working to fight radicalization and the financing of terrorism. We are providing urgent humanitarian aid, assistance with long-term development, and governance assistance. We are promoting diversity and reconciliation and ensuring a strong presence in Iraq, while also providing assistance to Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon. We will be a partner that is more useful than ever to our local and international allies.

• (1645)

[English]

We Canadians are respected for our ability to train ground troops, to support security forces, to combine effective humanitarian and development support, and to provide sound diplomacy. We have significant expertise in stabilization, security, and development programming. We know how to talk to regional leaders, to support them when we should and press them for action when we must.

We will bring our significant experience in training and development so that we can support Iraqis in their fight against ISIL and ensure that they can stand up against tyranny and meet its threat head-on. That is why we are stepping up our support. This is all in the best possible traditions of Canada.

We will be there to build resilience in the local population, the central objective of our efforts, since it is ultimately they who will have to manage the challenge of extremism and conflict.

With this plan Canada will enhance its effectiveness to stem the flow of foreign fighters, to cut off ISIL's access to financing, to counter its propaganda, and contribute to security and stabilization efforts in the region.

We will commit significant funds to address sexual and gender-based violence and other human rights abuses in ISIL-affected areas.

Canada will be better equipped to protect minority rights and minority communities in Iraq, to mitigate the risk posed by explosive remnants of war in areas of Iraq liberated from ISIL control, and to provide lethal assistance, light arms and ammunition, to peshmerga forces.

To help mitigate the threat that ISIL or other extremists acquire chemical and biological weapons, Canada is supporting Iraq's deterrence and tracking capabilities.

Canada is bringing thousands of refugees to our shores, but we must also support the region in its efforts to house many more families. More than 600,000 Syrians have fled to Jordan and over 1.2 million to Lebanon over the last three years. The leaders of Jordan and Lebanon are warning us that their countries have reached the breaking point. In these two countries, communities continue to

voice concerns about mounting local tensions as the newcomers compete with the host populations to access basic services.

In Lebanon, Canada will work to support border security to reduce the threat of ISIL spilling over into that country. For example, we will assist in building new border monitoring posts and provide skills-based training for the Lebanese armed forces, who are at the front lines in the defence against ISIL.

In Jordan, Canada will build on its established relationship with Jordan's military forces and its security and law enforcement agencies. We will be supporting Jordan's efforts to contain and degrade ISIL. Among other areas of focus, we will assist the Jordanians with technical training and equipping and improving its training facilities.

With respect to Syria, Canada will continue to support international efforts to find a political solution to the conflict and we will leverage our programming activities to that end as the opportunities arise.

Beyond these four focus countries, Canada will also support regional efforts in line with the global coalition against ISIL to stem the flow of funding, to interdict the recruitment and movement of fighters, and to counter the destructive and perverse narrative that ISIL espouses.

We will engage with all legitimate players in the region on different efforts at mediation, reconciliation, and peace negotiations, while also providing assistance to strengthen local conflict management capacities and local governance. We will regularly and firmly encourage the leadership in the region to put their people first, to pursue reconciliation and inclusion, and to seek peaceful political solutions instead of violent ones.

We will use our close partnerships with the most trusted and experienced humanitarian and development organizations on the ground. We will provide support to areas that have been liberated from ISIL control in Iraq. We will be there to support the return of displaced populations to their homes by assisting the efforts to restore basic services, such as water, electricity, and schools. Canadians will be there every step, offering our extensive knowledge, our professionalism, our strength, and our courage.

However, it is not only we who are saying that. Our allies have reacted positively to our new plan, which is not a surprise, since we consulted them. For example, the Pentagon underscored that the Canadian government's decision to "step up Canada's role in the campaign at this critical time." In the words of the U.S. Ambassador to Canada, Bruce A. Heyman, Canada's "significant contributions" are "in line with the Coalition's current needs".

This is precisely the point. This plan can be summarized in three words: comprehensive, integrated, and sustained.

First, it is comprehensive. The plan invests in most aspects of a durable solution, including military, political, and stabilization efforts; and separately, humanitarian and development assistance. Each of these elements is essential and complements the others.

Government Orders

Second, it is integrated. Our plan brings together resources and experience from across government and will be implemented in close co-operation and coordination with key partners and allies, including the countries in the region, members of the coalition, NGOs, and through our active participation in NATO and the UN, as well as through bilateral relations.

Finally, it is sustained. Through this plan, we are making a multi-year commitment to this effort because we recognize that this is a complex and protracted conflict.

Over the next three years, we are committed to investing approximately \$1.6 billion to respond to the crises in Iraq and Syria, and to address their impact on Jordan, Lebanon, and the wider region. The bulk of the funding, \$1.1 billion, will be for humanitarian and development assistance.

Canada will ensure that our assistance does not serve to support terrorist groups, including Hezbollah, and will place strict controls on funding and programming, so it goes where it is needed and is not diverted.

Last, our plan is also flexible. We know that the situation in the Middle East can change rapidly. So our strategy will be subject to regular reviews, precisely to ensure that it remains relevant and responsive to what is happening on the ground.

To conclude, we are bringing a broad array of capabilities that the coalition has identified as critical to the success of the anti-ISIL fight.

• (1650)

This is the plan we need and the plan the Prime Minister has presented to help us succeed.

[Translation]

As always, in the face of adversity, Canada will stand tall with skill, resolve, humanity and courage.

• (1655)

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a specific question for the minister.

The words we use when we talk about this conflict are important. The European Parliament recently passed a resolution using the word “genocide” to describe the actions of Daesh. Former secretary of state Hillary Clinton also used the word “genocide” to describe the actions of Daesh. We all agree that the actions of Daesh are unacceptable, but I want to ask specifically, is the minister willing to use the word “genocide” to describe what is happening?

[Translation]

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Speaker, I have no problem with that. This is certainly a horrible group, and no word, be it “genocide”, “massacre”, or “terror”, is strong enough.

This group is driven by a perverse and terrible ideology that makes young people think they will win salvation if they murder everyone who does not believe what they believe and if they kill men, women and children. We must do everything in our power to fight it.

[English]

It is important that we do everything to eradicate this group, and to do that we need to work optimally in a coalition of 65 countries. That is what this plan is all about.

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his speech.

We have a very clear mandate from the United Nations to prevent ISIS from recruiting foreign fighters.

However, the government's plan is silent on deradicalization efforts here in Canada even though that is critical to achieving the objective.

I would like to know why the government did not include a plan for deradicalization here in Canada.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Speaker, we have a deradicalization plan for Canada, but it is not part of the plan for Iraq and Syria.

The plan for Iraq and Syria involves deradicalization in Iraq, Syria and that region. However, and the member's question may be pertinent here, the plan also includes measures to prevent the recruitment of foreign fighters who may also be Canadian. The plan includes enhanced capabilities and measures to counter those recruitment efforts. That is part of the plan.

The plan focuses more on fighting radicalization over there in that region to stifle the terrorist group's perverse and diabolical propaganda so that nobody else thinks they will go to heaven by murdering their fellow human beings. That is what we need to focus on, and this plan will enable us to do a much better job of it.

I urge the member to vote for this plan.

[English]

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for his commitment to Canada and for representing us in the best way possible.

During his speech the minister mentioned the Canadian way, where we provide humanitarian aid, bring in stabilization and security programs, and train forces on the ground. Taking those things into consideration, how would this mission be better and more effective than the air strikes?

With respect to the air strikes, the Prime Minister made a commitment during the election campaign that we would end the air strikes. Is the only reason to end those strikes that the new mission would be a better and more effective one?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Speaker, the plan's aim is to be sure that Canada's contribution will be optimal in the coalition of 65 countries.

Air strikes are also the Canadian way. Our pilots are great Canadians. We have great support for them. However, Canada's priority should be looking at the needs of the coalition. There is a terrible need for training. We are good at training. The Minister of Defence will explain that in his own speech.

Government Orders

There is a need for more intelligence. We will double our efforts in intelligence.

There is a terrible need for humanitarian assistance and also for long-term development. The Minister of International Development will explain what we will do with respect to that.

Canada will be more effective with this plan. I urge all of my colleagues who want to fight ISIL, who want to help the region to become more stable, to support this plan and to vote yes to the motion.

• (1700)

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once more I rise to debate Canada's engagement in the Middle East. This will probably be my fifth or sixth intervention in the House.

Let me just go back to one point. The Minister of International Development and La Francophonie stated in *The Huffington Post*, and she stated very clearly, "Obviously, we will not get involved in any way in this once we have given money to an organization". She was talking about humanitarian assistance given to organizations which begs the question, "Would the jihadists be able to access this?"

Let me quote what the Minister of Foreign Affairs said this afternoon, when he answered a question from my colleague. He stated very clearly that we control, from start to finish, all aspects, and we ensure that help is given, clearly, and we will in all cases.

So, who is talking which way, the Minister of Foreign Affairs or the Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, who said we do not control anything?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of International Development and La Francophonie was not answering the question he mentioned. She was referring to the respect we have for the organizations with which we work.

Do we have respect for them? Yes, because we selected them very carefully. We work with the best ones we can imagine. We have a lot of experience working with them. We were working with them under the former government, and before.

This being said, of course we monitor to ensure that no money gets into bad hands. We do a bit from A to Z. We are very rigorous about that and these organizations know it. We want them to be sure that we will not provide funds to terrorist groups.

We are always ensuring that it is not happening as it was with the former government when the former government was funding the same organizations, by the way.

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government has promised to accede to the UN Arms Trade Treaty which would help prevent the flow of small arms to terrorists and insurgent groups, including ISIL.

Would the minister explain the delay in this secession?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure I understood the question. I am sorry.

However, one thing is sure. We will certainly do everything to monitor the support we provide, especially with the training, to ensure that it will be focusing on the fight against terrorist groups and not on factional fights that are everywhere in Iraq, or that help Peshmerga or any groups in Iraq.

Our allies have the same concern. We want to ensure that when we support these groups, it is to fight terrorist groups and not assist the fighting between Iraqi's legitimate forces. We will do everything to work with the coalition to ensure that all of us, including the Russians, focus on the fight against ISIL and not internal border conflicts in Iraq or Syria.

Ms. Karina Gould (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for his excellent speech. We have been discussing, in the House, the importance of having a comprehensive, integrated, and sustainable mission. We have talked about the defence intervention as well as development.

Would the minister further elaborate on the importance of having a diplomatic presence and a diplomatic engagement?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Speaker, in fact, it is a matter of principle. At the very moment Canada is sending Canadians into danger, it is a matter of principle for us to table when decisions are made. Then we need to strengthen our diplomatic efforts to be there when it counts, to be there when the coalition will have tough decisions to make. It has been neglected a bit in the past. We will be there much more with this plan which is an additional reason to vote for it.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour to speak today on this very important motion and the amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition.

One of the honoured roles I have is defence critic. I am extremely passionate about our Canadian Armed Forces. In the previous Parliament I was both chair of the defence committee and later, parliamentary secretary to the minister of national defence.

I understand the incredible risk that our military services, either in the regular or reserved forces, are willing to undertake to protect Canada. Everything that we hold dear in here, our democracy, our freedom of speech, our rights and liberties, are only possible because of the incredible sacrifices made by members of the Canadian Armed Forces and the veterans who came before them.

I want to pay tribute to every member who is currently serving in the Canadian Armed Forces, whether they are in the Royal Canadian Navy, the Royal Canadian Air Force, the Canadian army, in reserves or regular forces. I thank them for keeping us safe. We do not even realize the incredible efforts they take 24/7 to keep us safe in Canada.

They are the eyes of Canada on the world. They are standing on the wall to keep evil out and they are always prepared to go where no one else will go. They run toward danger. Their commitment is something each and every one of us in here should pay great respect for and thank them profusely.

Government Orders

I have been in contact with many veterans over the last couple of weeks and months, as the mission against ISIS was starting to change and with the idea of withdrawing our CF-18s. Families of current serving members are concerned about their sons and daughters, their husbands and wives. They want to ensure they have the protection they are entitled to when we are putting them in harm's way.

Our previous government brought a whole-of-government approach in dealing with ISIS that was well respected by our allies. We were part of the combat mission with our CF-18s and our air task force stationed out of Kuwait. It involved our Polaris refuel aircraft and two Auroras doing reconnaissance, finding targets, painting targets, and ensuring that we degraded ISIS.

It is because of that expertise and work, and risk that Canada was taken seriously to sit at the table to make decisions on the combat mission. Our special operations forces members who are serving with the Kurdish Peshmerga in an advise and assist role, providing training, and command and control, have done great work.

The accumulation of those two efforts really showed itself in December when ISIS mounted one of the largest attacks that the coalition had witnessed. They overran Kurdish Peshmerga positions between Mosul and Erbil and were able to break the line. Our Canadian special operations forces, along with the Kurdish Peshmerga, were able to push back, call in air strikes from Canadian CF-18s, and retake the ground. That is extremely commendable.

The Conservative government also provided humanitarian relief, over half of it going to Syrian refugees and displaced people, providing food, water, shelter, clothing, medical attention, and schooling opportunities that were not there, for hundreds of thousands of people. There was \$1 billion spent in the region and over half of that went to Syria.

We expanded the diplomatic corps, trying to engage more with our allies to find solutions in the region, and ultimately hope for a political resolution to the civil war within Syria. However, what we are dealing with, with ISIS, will not be dealt with through diplomacy. We know that.

● (1705)

The Prime Minister, in his comments, said that the most lethal weapon to barbarism is not hatred but reason. I do not think anyone here expects the Prime Minister to actually sit down with the leader of ISIS, such as al-Baghdadi, and try to reason with the man. We know that with every hostage ISIS terrorists have taken, we have tried to reason with them, but the hostages have ultimately, brutally died at their hands, burning in cages, crucified, or beheaded on camera for the world to see.

We can never lose sight that we are not dealing with reasonable people. However, we are not going after them in hatred either. We are exercising the responsibility to protect, which all members in this House agree with. It is a United Nations principle that we have the responsibility to protect the most vulnerable.

We know that ISIS is targeting religious and ethnic minorities: Shias, Christians, Yazidis, Kurds, Turkmen, and numerous others, just because they do not share its twisted ideology. We know that ISIS has gone after Sunnis who refused to recognize its attempt to

form a caliphate. ISIS has called them apostates and has executed, persecuted and ostracized them.

The only way we are going to stop ISIS, because it is an evil, is to destroy it. If we are going to bring a whole-of-government approach with diplomacy, humanitarian aid, training, and institution building, then we have to have combat.

Canada has always lifted its fair share. We have always punched above our weight. We have a reputation around the world for being there for the most vulnerable and for stepping in to stop atrocities. Therefore, it behooves me to understand why we would now step back.

Why would we retreat from a combat mission that our soldiers, aircrew, and sailors are so well trained for? Yes, they can do peacekeeping, and yes they do peacemaking, but first and foremost they are warriors. We have trained them to fight.

I can tell members that everybody I have talked to in the Canadian Armed Forces, regardless of their discipline, understands this fundamental more than anything else: the defence of our country, the defence of our society, and protecting the most vulnerable.

Canada has always acted as an ally, as a partner in a coalition. We have never gone out single-handedly to try and change the geopolitics in any part of the world. It is because of our strong relationship with our allies that we need to be more engaged.

We have not heard a single good reason from the government, from the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, or the Minister of National Defence, on why we have to stop bombing. The jets are already there, the resources are in place, the costs are accounted for, and the impact has been significant.

We are the fifth-largest contributor to air strikes. We actually fly more than our fair share of the sorties. About 10% of the sorties are actually flown by Canadian jets. We need to keep those things in mind as we look at the reports coming out on how ISIS is being degraded, how it is now on the run, and how just in the last four to six weeks it has had to start cutting back on how much it is paying its staff, terrorists, and fighters that are fighting our guys.

Those salaries are one of the reasons that the ISIS team has held together. However, because oil supplies have now been cut off, it does not have a way to get its oil to the black market. Infrastructure has been degraded, supply lines to bring in guns, ammunition, arms, and food has really been disrupted. Therefore, ISIS does not have the capability to continue its prolonged war, other than living off of its own genocidal views.

Government Orders

•(1710)

Now that we have it on the run, this is the time to hit it even harder. We keep saying that it is going to take boots on the ground. The Conservatives understand that. That is why we first put in our special operations forces to train the Kurdish peshmerga, a reliable ally with boots on the ground that are prepared not only to hold the line for the Kurdistan regional government in northern Iraq, but to push back and retake cities that have been lost to ISIS. There is a major offensive coming this spring. We want to ensure that we can take Mosul, and that is where the special operations forces come into play.

Yes, the Conservatives support the increased training mission to enable more boots on the ground. We are doing that in concert with other allies, like the British and the Americans. Ultimately, the street fighting will be done on the ground, but we still have to maintain the air support to protect our troops first and foremost, as we witnessed in December.

The rules of engagement are something that I do not think all of us always appreciate or understand, but the one thing we have to look at is how the coalition air force operates. Every country always maintains within its rules of engagement the responsibility of protection of its own troops. If ISIS decided to mount a large counteroffensive against numerous fighting positions for whatever reason and thought it could retake territory, if our troops got into trouble, our CF-18s would be there to provide air cover.

We know what happens when other aircrews are sometimes in the region. The minister talks a lot about mistakes of the past. He has been to Afghanistan on numerous occasions as a soldier, as a commander, as a leader, and has witnessed some of the mistakes. I would like to remind the House about 2002 when a U.S. F-15 air force jet dropped a 500-pound bomb on Canadians, mistaking them for the Taliban. That resulted in the deaths of four Canadian soldiers and another eight were seriously injured.

In 2006, Canadian troops were in camp burning garbage and the pilot of a U.S. A-10 Warthog army jet was disoriented due to the time of day and opened guns on the Canadians, killing one Canadian soldier. We can never diminish the importance of having direct communication between Canadian jets and Canadian troops on the ground. Our troops are not principal combatants, but we have already witnessed them coming under fire on numerous occasions. For that reason alone, our troops deserve close air protection.

We are tripling the number of trainers to 220. General Vance has said that is increasing the risk. Therefore, it becomes even more important that we maintain our six CF-18s in the fight.

If we look at this motion and the announcement, details are still lacking. After the announcement, it came to bear that we were bringing in some Griffon helicopters. We are still not sure if they are armed up or unarmed. Are they there for close combat support, or are they there to transport, to evacuate in case the need arises for medical assistance and lifting to hospitals? Are they there to ensure we can move people around without being exposed to improvised explosive devices along roadways? A lesson learned in Afghanistan was when so many of our troops were injured or killed because of roadside

bombs. We need to know exactly what that squadron of Griffon helicopters will be doing.

•(1715)

We talk about the intelligence gathering, which we welcome. We talk about the increased medical training, which Canada has a great reputation of doing. I should make a point of this. What the mission is doing now, what Canada is doing in Iraq, is very similar to what we are also doing in Ukraine. It is strictly a training mission. It is training principal combatants on how to engage with the enemy, providing command and control, advise, and assist. It is not a combat mission in the traditional sense anymore.

The rules of engagement for our troops on the ground are the same as if they were peacekeepers. If they were sitting in Bosnia and they are fired upon, they have every right to protect themselves. The arms that they carry are very much for that specific purpose, self-defence.

We still need to really look at the entire mission. That is why, if we look at our reputation on the world stage, it has diminished. We are not sitting at the main table anymore, making the decisions on where our troops will be stationed, how we bring the offensive back against ISIS, and ultimately crushing the enemy.

We hear what the Liberals feel has been congratulations for a job well done. Everybody who is here understands that there is the discussion that happens in public, the niceties, the civilities expressed between friends and allies, as I always have as a parliamentary secretary. However, there are others who know better. I have heard comments from people in the state department in the U.S. and the department of defence, and they are not happy that we are not carrying our load on the combat mission.

Matthew Fisher, a senior foreign correspondent characterized it this way. He said that to think that our friends or allies were happy about our pulling out our CF-18s was hogwash.

Retired Major General David Fraser said, "If we don't have our fighter jets, we are not going to have much of a voice...We won't get much recognition. Strategically, at the political level, we are going to lose here." He went on to say that we would not win this campaign with only air strikes, but we certainly would not without them.

Canada has a role. We have some of the best pilots in the world. The CF-18s have been upgraded. They have the best technological equipment. There are only a few countries that can do what CF-18 jets can do in targeting, reducing, and eliminating. We are not even aware of any CF-18 bomber strikes having any civilian casualties associated with them. They have always gone at the target, destroying infrastructure, fighting positions, training grounds and weapon caches.

I want to close with this. I know the Liberals really listen to some of their patriarchs of the party. John Manley, whom many people in here have a lot of respect for, said it this way, "As I've said before, if you want to sit at the table and when the waiter arrives with the bill, you excuse yourself to go to the washroom, we've been doing just that in trading in our Pearsonian reputation rather than fulfilling Pearsonian vision".

Government Orders

I ask the government to rethink its overall mission and leave the CF-18s in the fight. Again, I want to thank every member of the Canadian Armed Forces, particularly those like our special operations forces and our air task force members, including our CF-18 pilots. I wish them all the best. They are in our thoughts and prayers. Godspeed.

• (1720)

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I respect and appreciate the passion with which the member opposite gave his speech.

Let me put it in these terms. For those members who do not know, I was involved with the Saint John Sea Dogs hockey team prior to my life in politics. As a hockey team, if we were playing against another team we would have a certain approach. For example, if we played against the Moncton Wildcats, we would play one way; if we played against the Gatineau Olympiques, we would play another way.

The best way to defeat an opponent is to use our strengths by assessing the situation. It is not always the same approach that works, nor a one-size-fits-all approach.

My question to the member opposite is this. Does he not appreciate and respect that we as a government are doing what we think is the best way for us to defeat an opponent?

• (1725)

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, if the member wants to use a hockey analogy, if I had been coaching the Edmonton Oilers back when Gretzky was playing, I would have had a lot of different weapons on the ice and I would have used them all. The Canadian Armed Forces has incredible capabilities and skills. They are trained and they are ready. Taking the CF-18 off the ice would be like pulling Gretzky out of the game.

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his well-stated support for our Armed Forces, and I thank the Liberal government for bringing this question to the floor.

Can the hon. member explain why his party believes that bombing works, given the examples we have from the region that indicate that it does not contribute to a peaceful outcome; rather, it contributes to the refugee crisis?

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, I would ask that the member not confuse the indiscriminate bombings taking place right now by the Russian Federation. This past week we have seen some despicable attacks by Russian fighter jets on hospitals where Doctors Without Borders are operating. We see huge civilian casualties occurring, which is adding to the refugee crisis and to the migration of refugees to Europe. There is speculation that some of that is done intentionally to destabilize the coalition and our European allies.

The Canadian fighter jets have been very successful in targeting ISIS only: ISIS terrorists, its fighters, its commanders. We have seen coalition fighter jets take out many of the ISIS leaders. Because of this, we should be leaving our CF-18s there to degrade the ability of ISIS to continue its spread of terrorism. If we got rid of ISIS, we could probably deal with the Syrian civil war, with the Syrian regime

under Bashar al-Assad, with the Syrian free army, with the PKK, and with all of the other groups that are involved in the Syrian conflict.

This is again President Putin negotiating a peace deal with the United States on Syria and then not honouring that peace agreement. We just witnessed that twice with respect to the Minsk peace agreement with Ukraine, where Russia has refused to honour the commitments it has made during the negotiations.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his fine speech. I want to acknowledge that the government is holding this debate in the House and carrying on the tradition started by the previous Conservative government.

That being said, I was surprised by one of the statements made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and I would like to know what my colleague to my left thinks about it. The Minister of Foreign Affairs talked about the fact that he wanted to put more emphasis on deradicalization in Syria and Iraq. We know that even here in Canada the various social sciences experts who study this phenomenon of radicalization, namely political scientists, anthropologists, and psychologists, all say that the root of the problem has not yet been determined and that we are far from finding the solution to this problem.

What does my colleague think about the fact that the minister wants to deradicalize people in a combat zone when we are having such a hard time doing that here at home?

• (1730)

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, the critic for Veterans Affairs, who is a veteran himself, for his comments.

I think every Canadian and every member of the coalition is worried about radicalization. We have to stop the radicalization. That is why it is important that we work with community leaders here in Canada. We have had the biggest success where community leaders have engaged with policing agencies, with the government, on identifying those who are being radicalized and in getting their first.

However, ultimately the radicalization is being done by ISIS, and ISIS has a very aggressive marketing campaign, a very strong presence on social media, and is able to spread its hatred and its warped sense of religion.

That is why we have to defeat ISIS so it cannot go out there and spread its hate, attract our youth and attract foreign fighters to continue with this war. We have to crush the head of the snake.

Government Orders

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, my question for the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman is whether or not members of his party have such a short memory that they do not recall the bombing of Libya. The bombing of Libya was insisted upon and, unfortunately, I was the only member of Parliament to vote against the continued bombardment in June, 2011.

I recall the former Conservative minister of foreign affairs in this place saying that his government recognized the rebel forces in Libya as the legitimate government of Libya, and we took sides and decided they were the legitimate government of Libya, even though it included al-Qaeda forces. He said that we might not know what that government really would be, but we could be sure of one thing, John Baird said, that it could not be worse than Moammar Gadhafi.

It is now a failed state, where all the weapons flowed to terrorist groups. Bombardment is not the best way to bring peace; it never brings peace and it fuels ISIS. Misunderstanding complexity is a threat to the region.

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, I was very proud of the contributions of Canada through the Royal Canadian Air Force under the leadership of General Charles Bouchard in the Libyan conflict.

History is always 20/20. We can always look back and see where we made mistakes. However, the reason to go in there, and I appreciate the member's pacifism, was the responsibility to protect, which I thought all members of the House support and the United Nations values.

If we were sure that Moammar Gadhafi was using sex as a weapon, attacking tribes in the outlying areas, and also threatening neighbours, he had to be taken out. Ultimately, we did not follow through where we should have, and stabilized that region.

That is the reason we need to have that whole-of-government approach and destroy ISIS right now in Iraq and Syria so it does not have the ability to continue to kill innocent civilians.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Briefly, Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague for his speech. I prefer his tone and the tone of his leader. There is no excessive partisanship here. We have disagreement about how we may be more effective in the coalition, but that is the key point.

Take the analogy of a hockey team. Unfortunately, Gretzky is not Canada, but the United States. However, Canada can play a great role in the team if we admit that is the case, and focus on what the team needs the most. We are tripling the training and doubling the intelligence capacity and so on. It is why the reaction of our allies was good.

It is not that our air strikes were not valuable. It is that there is no shortage of air strike capacity in the coalition, and a terrible shortage of training, humanitarian assistance, and development, and contra-radicalization and so on.

• (1735)

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, I maintain that Canada has the capability to do it all and has the opportunity to leave the CF-18s in the fight.

I ask the Minister of Foreign Affairs to leave the CF-18s in the battle, because we have to be engaged, we have to stop this scourge on the face of the earth and ensure that the people of Iraq and Syria have the opportunity to benefit from our institution-building and the humanitarian compassion that we will show them in the time ahead.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the critic for national defence for his passionate comments about the members of the Canadian Armed Forces and what they do for us. One thing we can always agree upon, not just the members of this House but all Canadians, is the great work that our men and women do for us on a 24-7 basis around the world.

It is my privilege to rise in support of the motion tabled by the Prime Minister. Last week, our government presented a detailed plan to broaden, enhance, and redefine our contribution to the fight against ISIL.

Today, I would like to speak to the House about the military elements of that plan. Before I begin, however, I would like to remind the House of the evolution of this mission and to explain the context that necessitated this new approach.

When Canada's military mission began in the fall of 2014, it was in response to an emerging and immediate crisis. The situation in Iraq and Syria was grim. ISIL was advancing rapidly and claiming territory. It was taking charge of abandoned military equipment for its own use. It had the momentum.

Since then, the reality on the ground has changed. ISIL has lost territory. It has lost the freedom of movement. It is forced to move by night in small numbers or under cover of the civilian population. Its leadership has been targeted. Its morale is in decline. As a result, the Iraqi military is able to conduct offensive operations and reclaim territory, most recently in Ramadi.

ISIL remains a danger, but the situation on the ground is much different from 18 months ago. ISIL is losing momentum. Against that backdrop, our mission partners, the U.S. chief among them, have been reviewing the coalition efforts and reconsidering the best way forward.

At a national level, we too have an obligation to look toward the next phase of the armed conflict, not simply because we faced an expiration date on March 31 and not simply because we had a new mandate for Canadians, but because the realities of the mission demanded it.

With that in mind, shortly after taking office this government began a deliberate and comprehensive review process. We knew we needed to undertake a thorough analysis of the evolving situation on the ground. We needed to consider our desired impact and the tools at our disposal. We needed to devise a comprehensive, long-term strategy for Canada that was in lockstep with our partners.

Government Orders

To support that process, I personally travelled to the region twice. I consulted with allies and partners, and I listened to our troops on the ground. In fact, I met with military commanders, front-line troops, and regional leaders, including Iraq's minister of defence. I spoke with U.S. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter. I spoke with Brett McGurk, the U.S. special presidential envoy for the global coalition to counter ISIL. I met with Michael Fallon, the U.K. Secretary of State for Defence.

At the same time, I worked closely with the Chief of the Defence Staff and senior officials here at home to gain a better understanding of the skills and assets available within the Canadian Armed Forces and across the Government of Canada.

My cabinet colleagues undertook a similar process, and together we brought informed advice and frank analysis to the cabinet table. Together, we were able to identify a meaningful contribution for Canada, which is synchronized across government and responds to the shifting needs of the coalition effort.

We have recognized that security, diplomacy, humanitarian assistance, and development will all play a major role in this endeavour.

ISIL is not a singular threat that we can just carve out and dispose of. It is dangerously interwoven with internal political instabilities and broader regional dynamics. It is a parasite that thrives off the discord, poverty, and hardship that plagues the region.

For that reason, the military elements of Canada's new approach are now more clearly situated within a broader, whole-of-government plan. This integrated approach will help deal with the immediate needs of the people of Iraq and Syria, while also establishing the conditions for long-term stability in the region.

For the military line of effort, we recognize that it is ultimately the people of Iraq who will be responsible for stabilizing their country.

● (1740)

We need to enable them to defeat ISIL, though, and we have the expertise to help bolster their capabilities and prepare them for that fight. Going forward, this is where we will be focusing much of our effort. As we announced last week, we will triple our commitment to the train, advise, and assist mission in northern Iraq.

At the same time, we are going to significantly increase our intelligence capability. There is a complex interplay of forces that underlies the conflict environment in Iraq and Syria. We need to have a clearer picture of how all the pieces fit together, and we need to better anticipate the impact of our actions. Our enhanced intelligence contribution will be invaluable in this regard.

In addition to our training and intelligence activities, our Polarix air refueller and Aurora surveillance aircraft will continue to serve as critical enablers for the coalition effort.

We will also be offering ministerial liaison teams to the government of Iraq and additional capacity-building efforts in Jordan and Lebanon in close partnership with Global Affairs Canada.

We will increase our medical presence to support Canadian and coalition personnel and to offer mentoring support to the Iraqi security forces.

In addition to these ongoing elements, we also intend to deploy a small helicopter detachment with aircrew and support personnel. This will provide safe and reliable transport for our troops and also for our material and equipment.

Overall, we will increase the number of deployed personnel to approximately 830 people. Please keep in mind that this is a dangerous armed conflict and this mission carries inherent risk to our men and women in uniform. This mission will be riskier than air operations, but at this point in the campaign these new lines of activity are essential to future success and the defeat of ISIS. Our people will be in close proximity to the dangers inherent in the region. There may be times when they will have to defend themselves, their coalition partners, or the forces they are mentoring.

As the Chief of the Defence Staff emphasized last week, we will do everything in our power to keep our personnel safe. We are adding specialized capabilities to mitigate the risk to our personnel. In particular, they will benefit from the enhanced situational awareness that will come from our bolstered intelligence capabilities. They will be closely supported by our medical personnel.

Also, as a former soldier, I can tell the House that those on the ground are well aware of the risks associated with military operations and they will take their own necessary precautions. I know from personal experience in combat that the Canadian Armed Forces are highly trained and experienced men and women who know how to operate effectively in a conflict environment. Ultimately, this is what they train for, to accomplish their mission and to make a difference, and in this case, to contribute to the defeat of ISIL.

Last week I was in Brussels and I met with our coalition partners. I had a frank and open discussion with many key allies, most notably Secretary Carter of the U.S.

I also met with the Iraqi defence minister, as well as ministers from France, Germany, Italy, Turkey, New Zealand, and Poland. I was able to present to them in person the details of Canada's new approach.

There are more than 60 countries working together in this fight, and I can say without hesitation that they have welcomed Canada's new contributions.

Last week Secretary Carter proposed a new way forward in the mission against ISIL. He asked coalition members to step up their contributions as we enter the next phase of the fight. He talked about refocusing and accelerating our collective efforts.

Government Orders

Through the course of the coalition discussions in Brussels, two pressing requirements came to the fore. The coalition needs increased intelligence assets and more training and assistance for local security forces. I am proud to say that Canada's new approach has landed right on target. In fact, a Pentagon spokesperson said, "The Canadian announcement is the kind of response the secretary has been looking for from coalition members as [we]...push to accelerate the campaign against ISIL".

The coalition commander, Lieutenant General Sean MacFarland, came to me personally and described our mission—moving forward with our capabilities that we are bringing to the fore—as forward-looking.

A U.S. military spokesperson for the coalition has characterized Canada's contribution as "extraordinarily helpful".

• (1745)

From the coalition perspective, there is sufficient air power to continue pressing ISIL positions and to hamper their movements.

We now need to intensify our work with local partners to build real, long-term security solutions for the region. As the Prime Minister has said, we must take action in a way that will affect durable results on the ground.

Canada remains steadfast in its commitment to the fight against ISIL. We recognize the shifting landscape in theatre. We heard the views of our partners and allies. We undertook a deliberate and thoughtful review process to make sure Canada's contribution remains at the heart of the coalition campaign.

Canada's new approach is coherent and comprehensive. It leverages some of Canada's core strengths. It reflects Canada's interests and values and meets the critical needs of the coalition effort.

In closing, I would like to echo the Prime Minister in acknowledging the tremendous service and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform. I want to express my sincere gratitude to those who have served, are serving, and will serve on Operation Impact. In particular, I would like to commend members of the Royal Canadian Air Force including our CF-18 pilots and members of the aircrew and support personnel who have done an outstanding job for Canada and conducted their final mission as part of Operation Impact on Monday.

Let us also remember that we have men and women deployed around the world, in the Ukraine, the Mediterranean, the Sinai, and elsewhere. Some 1,400 Canadian Armed Forces personnel are currently deployed on operations abroad. It is thanks to their efforts and those of their predecessors that we are able to gather like this, as democratic representatives, to have a frank and open debate about Canada's role in the world. We, as parliamentarians and as Canadians, owe them and their families a tremendous debt of gratitude.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for his service to our country as the first Sikh regimental commander, a lieutenant-colonel when he left the forces. I appreciate his service, I appreciate his speech, but I do disagree with him and I disagree with the motion of the House. I think of this

matter as a three-legged stool: we have to do humanitarian work, training, and air strikes.

In fact, the air strikes are so effective, let me list a few of the ISIS commanders we have killed. As we know and the member knows, there is fighting on the front and the air strikes are there to kill commanders in the field who do not take part in combat on the front lines. Abu Salah, the ISIS finance minister, was killed December 9, with two of his accomplices, by air strike. Abu Maryam, the ISIL enforcer and senior leader of the extortion network was killed December 9, 2015, by air strike. Abu Rahman al-Tunisi, who was coordinating the transfer of information, people, weapons logistics, was killed December 9, 2015. Mohammed Emwazi, known as Jihadi John, responsible for some of the most brutal acts of murder to be shown on YouTube, the ISIS propaganda leader, was killed November 12, 2015, by air strike.

The list goes on and on of ISIS commanders who have perished in the field, killed by air strikes. Does the member think these were mistakes or that these types of air strikes are not worth continuing so we can further degrade the enemy in the field?

• (1750)

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Madam Speaker, when the member talks about the effectiveness of air strikes and taking out commanders, the way the evolution of the mission has gone, that is exactly what has happened. The air strikes were effective and targeted, but the enemy also learns from our lessons. I remember when I was serving, I had a rule. When we were in some intense combat, we could never use a strategy twice because the enemy would always learn from it.

When we looked at the analysis with our military commanders, we looked at where the mission was at, where the evolution of the enemy was at. When I asked the ground force commander, General Clark, what he needed, the first thing he said to me was "intelligence". The enemy is getting smarter because of our effectiveness in the past. We need to increase our intelligence capability. Why our Canadian intelligence capability? It is effective. Why do we need to increase our training capacity? This is what is needed on the ground. This is to defeat ISIS. It can only happen with troops on the ground. It cannot be done from the air.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for his speech today. It was much more clear than some of the other information we have had. I would also like to thank him, of course, for his service in the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan.

As someone who also worked in Afghanistan as part of a training mission on international human rights in 2002, I share some of the doubts that the minister expressed about the ultimate impact of our mission in Afghanistan, as we saw the government of Afghanistan lose control of the Kandahar airport on December 15 of last year.

Government Orders

I guess my question to the minister would be this. How is what we are doing now all that different from what we did in Afghanistan, where we had both air and ground campaigns and training missions, and yet we did not really succeed in uprooting the Taliban? Would we not be better going after the sources of money and arms for ISIS than the program we are actually pursuing?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Madam Speaker, the situation in Afghanistan is different from that in Iraq. Nonetheless, we always need to take a comprehensive approach to any situation.

The effectiveness of the Iraqi security forces is the key to success in the defeat of ISIL. However, we have also taken a much more comprehensive approach in looking at capacity building, not just within the forces themselves. The ministerial liaison teams are going to go directly to the ministry of defence and the ministry of the interior. Therefore, we are looking at more and different capacity building to make sure that we will bring some solution to the difficulties of the political situation that happened in the past and caused some of the issues.

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the people of St. John's East to whom I have spoken have a lot of concerns about the complexity of the conflict in that region and that there are so many different conflicts being engaged there, not merely against ISIL but also among the various parties involved.

My question for the minister is this. How are the efforts in this new Operation Impact going to allow our partners to target ISIL as part of the combat and not inadvertently step on the toes of our allies or intervene in improper conflicts that are also going on in the same area?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question. That is a very good question.

That is one of the reasons we have enhanced the intelligence capability. It is not strictly for understanding the direct action fight to target ISIL but to understand the dynamics of the region. It is very critical, because if someone gets one piece wrong, that can actually inflame the situation. This is one of the reasons the commanders on the ground are asking for the right intelligence capability. Canada has this type of capability. Unfortunately, I am not able to discuss this in the House. However, I have offered to have discussions with critics in private on this. We can really enhance the capability so that we do not target the wrong people.

• (1755)

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. Minister of National Defence for his service and for a great speech today.

It is common knowledge in the army—and I am sure he would probably be more experienced than I on that—that an army without air force ability is really not a great thing to have. We would not be able to protect our troops on the ground or even achieve dominance on the ground when operating in such a fashion.

The minister mentioned at the beginning of his speech that, with quick air strikes, we were able to get the Iraqi army on the ground to battle back and start making ground, which is to limit the power of ISIS on the ground, and that is just because of the air strikes. Would

the minister agree with me that air strikes are very important and crucial for any military operation, yes or no?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Madam Speaker, air strikes are crucial for any campaign and having all the capabilities that are needed to defeat a complex enemy like ISIL. However, when it comes to the use of air strikes, the coalition has a tremendous amount of capability for air strikes.

When we are involved in a conflict, we cannot bring our assets to coalition partners to have them figure out where they go. To be a responsible partner, one needs to have an understanding of what is going on and what capabilities are needed, and then one can take on a certain responsibility, being better at that. This is the conversation I have been able to have. I am actually very pleased with how well this conversation has gone, and this has allowed Canada to bring in the right asset to contribute to the fight.

However, yes, the coalition has a tremendous amount of air strike capability as well.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the minister why it is that we have not gone after the sources of funding and the arms sales to ISIL. We know that \$1 million to \$3 million a day in oil is still being sold on the world market, and this is what allows it to pay its troops and buy arms. We know that it is getting arms and ammunition.

Is it because it would embarrass some of our allies and friends that we have not actually gone after the arms and the funding? Can the minister tell the House why not?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Madam Speaker, unfortunately, in the House we do not have a lot of time to talk about all the capabilities. However, yes, we are actually targeting ISIL's finances, and FINTRAC is working extensively on that.

A lot of work, as part of the coalition, has been done. Anti-radicalization, with the U.S. efforts, in many different countries is having an impact. We are looking at a multitude of things, and ISIL's ability to finance itself and recruit has been targeted as well.

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, once more it is a pleasure for me to rise in the House and participate in a debate on Canada's mission overseas. As I indicated for the Minister of Foreign Affairs, this is the seventh debate that I have taken part in since Canada became engaged or when the debates came to Parliament. I would like to remind the Liberal Party that the first time Canada entered into Afghanistan it was without a debate in the House. At that time, former prime minister Paul Martin sent Canadian Forces into Afghanistan without having a debate in the House.

Subsequently, when we came into power, we said that any time a Canadian operation took place, we would engage the House of Commons in a debate. I am glad the current government has followed our lead and has brought this motion to Parliament to be debated because many points need to be addressed.

Government Orders

A couple of points come to mind about this. During all those debates, when the Liberals were in the opposition, there were many areas that we agreed upon. We definitely did not ever agree with the NDP, but the NDP's approach is completely different. It is one of humanitarian assistance, but never to go to the root cause of what crisis has started and why it started. However, on many occasions, we agreed upon many points with the Liberal Party.

The point in this debate is that we definitely do not agree with the Liberal motion of withdrawing the air strikes and the air fighting capability of attacking ISIL and degrading it. Past experience has shown that air strikes are one of the most effective ways of degrading ISIL.

We sat here and listened to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of National Defence, and others give reasons for expanding capacity and sending out special forces to train the forces on the ground, as well as humanitarian assistance. Let me just remind the Liberal Party that this is what this government had originally proposed. We are already doing it in Iraq and Syria.

On many occasions, I attended conferences representing the former foreign affairs minister, talking at the conferences about engagement, both politically, in which they are heavily engaged, and diplomatically. As well, many of my colleagues went there to see what the Canadian Forces were doing.

Let me go a step further back in history. It was under the proposal by the then Liberal foreign affairs minister John Manley that there should be parliamentary oversight for our missions and he asked that we create a special committee on Afghanistan. We did, and I was a member of the committee. That committee visited Afghanistan to see Canadian engagement there. When I talked to the Afghanistan people, there was no question that they were very thankful that Canadian soldiers were there, because we had a different approach. We actually embedded into their midst and went out with them into the field. As members know, one of our soldiers was attacked with an axe when he was totally engaged and embedded in the Afghanistan forces. It was an approach that brought us thanks from the Afghanistan people.

I was a little amazed when the defence minister said that our engagement in Afghanistan was a mess. I did not understand how it could be a mess. The fact is that the generals and everybody came before the parliamentary committee to give us an overview of what was taking place, what needed to be done, and was right to be done. When the committee, which included myself and my Liberal colleague at the time, the foreign affairs critic, Bob Rae, went to Afghanistan, we heard from soldiers and commanders. Nobody told us that the mission was a mess. It came as a big surprise to me. Of course, the Minister of National Defence was there and actually engaged. However, the minister coming to the House and saying it was a mess when nobody else told anybody that it was a mess came as a big surprise.

● (1800)

Getting back to the question of our engagement in Syria and Iraq, I attended three conferences of foreign ministers to bring peace and stability to Iraq after the Gulf War. In all this time in the engagement, it became pretty obvious that, due to the partisan politics of former Prime Minister Maliki, everything was falling apart, which gave rise

to ISIL. We all know today that the terrible root of ISIL arose due to the instability both in Iraq and Syria.

As a matter of fact, when I first went to Turkey, I visited the refugee camps. At that time, the Turkish government told us that it did not want any help. Today, with the massive refugee crisis taking place, it is seeking international assistance. I am glad that we agreed to that.

On the question of the pillars of humanitarian assistance, diplomacy, and training on the ground, yes, that is part and parcel of the whole thing. However, on taking out one of the most effective means of degrading ISIL, the air strikes, and saying that the coalition forces will carry on, I just heard the Minister of National Defence say that they are learning something.

I am a little surprised. The fact of the matter is that no other coalition force has said that it would withdraw its air strikes. It is only we in Canada. In fact, on the other hand, the British went back recently to their Parliament to start air strikes, because they felt that was the most effective thing to do. Yet, here I am sitting in the House listening to the Minister of National Defence say that the Liberals are actually learning a lesson, that we are the only ones supposed to have learned this lesson on air strikes and are withdrawing from this thing. However, all the other coalition partners are going in with more strikes, including the U.S.A.

The minister said that he talked to the defence ministers when he went to Brussels, and they accepted. What do we expect them to say: no? The Liberals already made a campaign promise and openly said, before any consultation with anyone, that they were going to take the air strikes out. Therefore, this was already public knowledge. They made this commitment publicly without thinking deeper about it, and now, of course, they expect the coalition partners to say they are doing a great job and that they agree. No, they are not going to say that. They understand what an election promise is.

Nonetheless, the Liberals made this election promise, among many others, which they have broken after realizing they were not sustainable. Most important was the one on a budget deficit of \$10 billion, which is not sustainable. We saw it with the refugee crisis, that they would bring in so many people by the end of last year, but they could not do it due to logistical problems. At the end of the day, they made a campaign promise.

I know for a fact, because I was in the opposition, that one does not have all the facts. When one does get all the facts, then there is a re-evaluation, and it is very easy to re-evaluate this. This is why we are having this debate and making a very clear point of why the air strikes are very effective and why they should be resumed, which is what our amendment talks about.

I want to talk about the other issue of humanitarian assistance.

Government Orders

The Minister of International Development in the *Huffington Post* said very clearly that once the government gives money, it then has no control over it. However, the question was asked if the jihadists got access to it. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, when we were debating on *CPAC*, said not to expect jihadists to wear a t-shirt that says “I’m a jihadist” on it. It is absolutely naive to talk about that. However, we are saying that if the jihadists hear of these things, then, yes, they can take advantage of them. This is one of the reasons we are opposed to UNRWA getting this money. We know from past experience that money sent to it was misused against Israel. Henceforth, we need to have oversight.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development said yesterday, in answer to my question, that universality was very important. She was asking us a question, and said that they were just following what we were doing. I am glad she is following what we were doing, because if she really followed what we were doing, I am sure that humanitarian assistance would go to the right people.

However, it was publicly stated that we do not have any control over the assistance money, but then today in question period the Minister of Foreign Affairs said that, no, we have complete control over it and know where it is going. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence said that, yes, we have control over it.

• (1805)

Fine, I am happy they have control over it. I am happy they will work hard and ensure that Canadian dollars will not go to jihadists, that they will make every effort to ensure that happens.

They cannot wash their hands of something that is not theirs. It is Canadian tax dollars going out there. They are duty bound to ensure that those hard-earned Canadian dollars do not go to the wrong people. That is absolutely fundamental. It is very important that the Minister of International Development does not get up and publicly say that they wash their hands of it. That is absolutely the wrong signal.

They will defend that in the House, but that is fine. Good. I am happy to hear what the Minister of Foreign Affairs said, that they will do proper diligence to ensure that money does not go to these groups. I can tell the House, from this side, we will keep an eye on that to ensure that the money for humanitarian assistance goes to the right people.

We agree that humanitarian assistance is vitally important in addressing the issue. We see the refugees coming. That is another pillar to bring peace to the region. The third is diplomacy. We all agree. As a former parliamentary secretary for foreign affairs, I was part of diplomacy working in that region.

It is a complex region. The crucial thing is that Canadians have always stood up when called to do our duty. We are again today doing the same thing. We are debating, which is the effective way to do it. We have past experience.

The Minister of National Defence says we have past experience, we are going to learn, and we are going to move forward. However, we are the only ones who somehow have found a way to move forward. We are the only ones who seem to have found a way that

intelligence capacity is something we need. He has been part and parcel of the military. Everyone knows that is a vital component. Certainly, all of a sudden that becomes more important. There are 60 coalition factions out there and all of them are working in the same capacity on this.

It comes as no surprise, as our Leader of the Opposition has stated and my colleague, the defence critic, has stated very clearly, why we cannot support the motion and why we have put forward amendments to the motion. Hopefully, we will continue doing that.

Do I have time left, Madam Speaker?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): You have six minutes.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Madam Speaker, I will take my six minutes to address this very important issue for Canadians.

ISIL is spreading its terror throughout the world. We know from Paris, Indonesia, and Nigeria with Boko Haram fighting there. In Somali, it is Al Shabaab fighting there. In Kenya, Al Shabaab has arrived there as well. The root of terrorism is spreading. We need to fight together to fight it.

No one disputes the fact that working with those affected, the local population, is the most effective way of handling this. That is why we are with the Peshmerga in Iraq, why we went to Nigeria to help build capacity, and why we said we would support the Kenyans in building their capacity to fight terrorism. That is the most effective way.

Right now, the most effective way to stop the biggest threat to the world, the most terrible terrorist organization, is in Syria and portions of Iraq. That is where we have to go and attack. We have been doing it in an effective way. The Minister of Defence and everyone stands up and says it. We all know our pilots and our military personnel have done a marvellous job of degrading the capacity of ISIL.

• (1810)

That is why we are extremely surprised that the Liberal Party wants to take away an effective tool. Then, after deciding it wants to take this tool away, it makes its excuses, saying it has to put in more training officers and that we will have better intelligence capacity. It is already there. They can also do that. There is nothing stopping them increasing the training forces or the intelligence gathering.

However, why would that be at the expense of the most effective weapon we have in destroying ISIL? That is what everyone is asking. That is what Canadians are asking. In poll after poll, this is the question everyone is asking. That is the question the government will have to answer for the Canadian public.

Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his entertaining speech. I have known my hon. colleague for many years. He and I came into the House at the same time. He certainly is a well-travelled colleague. He gave us an itinerary of where he has been in the last number of years.

Government Orders

I have been listening to this debate, and it is passing strange to me. The Conservatives agree that we should triple our advise-and-assist mission. The Conservatives agree that we should double our intelligence mission. The Conservatives agree that a helicopter component is an important component to these two missions. The Conservatives agree that we should have a medical component to this mission.

The Conservatives agree with the upping of the amount of money for humanitarian assistance. The Conservatives actually agree, reluctantly may I say, with the resettlement of refugees here in this country. The Conservatives kind of reluctantly agree, as well, that diplomatic re-engagement is a good thing.

The only thing they disagree with is our opposition to the bombing mission continuing. Members will be interested to know that up till February 9, there have actually been 67,000 sorties, of which 10,000 have been in strikes. Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Jordan, Netherlands, U.K., Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and UAE have all been involved in these strikes.

Do members not think at this point that it is time to re-evaluate this mission and enable our security forces, the security forces that we wish to train, to take the fight to ISIS? Everyone agrees that bombing alone will not finish this mission.

• (1815)

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Madam Speaker, as the member said, I know him very well. I want to correct him and say that my speech was not an entertaining one. It was a serious speech to give some attention to this thing. By saying that it was an entertaining speech, he is degrading the debate in the House, as he has been doing all day. I want to correct that. Please do not say it is an entertaining speech.

Coming back to the facts, the member said that air strikes are not only ones. Agreed, air strikes are not the only ones. I am very glad he got up and said what the Conservatives agreed with, because that is what we have been doing in the past, in the debates that he and I have had in the House. We have been doing all of that. I am very happy he got up and stated what the Conservatives agree with.

Let me make it very clear, in response to the hon. member saying very clearly that air strikes are not effective and his wanting to withdraw them, that one of the most important elements is that the capabilities of our jets are the finest in the world. That is what coalition forces need. That is why the coalition forces are a little disappointed in the Liberal government.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Madam Speaker, we know full well that with the international arms trade, Canadian weapons are ending up in enemy hands.

Does my colleague not think that signing the Arms Trade Treaty could at least help in reducing the Islamic State's power and would be more effective at stopping its progress?

I talked about "signing" the treaty, but I would add "ratifying".

[*English*]

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Madam Speaker, we have debated the question on the arms treaty. We made our point very clear that there were some domestic issues with the laws that would not allow us to

sign that treaty as well. Also, let me say that the treaty will not stop ISIL from advancing. Contrary to what the NDP has said, the treaty will not stop these terrorists from attacking. That is absolutely wrong. For that reason, we really need to degrade ISIL's capabilities. One of the most effective ways is with our military engagement, which we know the NDP opposes and has been opposing since I have been in this House.

• (1820)

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to make a comment on the speech by the member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

It is important to remind the House why we are here today. When the previous government proposed the motion that authorized Canada's combat mission in northern Iraq and Syria in the fall of 2014, it was a mission proposed in the form of a motion in the House that had been worked on in concert with its allies. In fact, if we look at the wording of the October 7, 2014, motion, it is almost identical to a motion that was adopted in the British House of Commons at the same time. This was something that the government was doing because it was the right thing. It was also something done in close co-operation with Canada's allies, such as France, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

What happened in the fall of 2014 is very telling. At the time, the Liberals decided not to support the government's motion, not out of any issue of substance but out of a pure political calculation. The proof was that at the time Irwin Cotler actually abstained from the vote, and many other Liberals criticized the Liberal Party's decision. The final proof is that the current government has had to twist itself into a pretzel with respect to the current motion in front of the House in order to continue with some sort of a mission against ISIS.

According to the current government, we will pull out the CF-18s in that area of the world but yet continue with our surveillance and the refuelling of aircraft. It is a nonsensical motion. It proves that the Liberals were playing pure politics when they made the decision not to support the previous government's original motion of 2014.

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for giving a historical perspective of what happened in the last Parliament on this issue. It is a very good point. We have now heard the Minister of National Defence say that he met with the coalition and he told them what we are planning to do.

I have a question for the member. When the Liberals decided during the election that they were going to pull out the CF-18s, did they consult with anyone from the coalition forces at that time? If they had done so, they would have been told that it was a wrong move to make this election promise. Let me remind the Liberals that they only got 39% of the votes. Over 60% of Canadians did not vote for them. Therefore, let us not go into this whole idea that they speak for Canadians. At the end of the day, if they had talked to the coalition forces, they would have been told that, and they would not have made that stupid promise they made during the election.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member said that he agrees on nine out of the 10 things in this motion but for some reason he has a problem with pulling the CF18s out. As the hon. member agrees with nine out of the 10 things, he should be able to support this motion.

Adjournment Proceedings

I would also like to correct the hon. member when he said that our defence minister said that the mission in Afghanistan was a mess. I am very proud, and we should all be proud, of the work the minister did on our behalf when he was fighting in Afghanistan.

My comment to my colleague is this: he should support this motion and be proud.

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Madam Speaker, he says that I seem to have a problem with the motion. I want to let him know that not I but Canadians have a problem with this government's motion. He should look at the motion and see if he feels he can support our amendment.

As far as the contributions, the defence minister has made a great contribution to Canada. He is a great Canadian.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence.

I do not know if he will have enough time for all of his speech, but I am sure we can take it up at some other point in time.

Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think I will have an opportunity to take a breath but, in taking a breath, I want to note that I am splitting my time, what few seconds I have, with the member for Orléans.

Given the few minutes available to me at this time, I thought I should put a summary point on this debate.

I want to commend colleagues for, largely, the civility of the debate. It has been the aspiration of the Prime Minister and the cabinet to improve the tone of the House. Based upon at least the first day of debate on this contentious motion, there has been some success.

In summary, as I indicated to my hon. colleague with whom I share a long relationship, sometimes strange relationship, the points of agreement far exceed the points of disagreement. It is clear that the conflict is entering another phase. It is clear that the bombing has had some success. It is clear that there are quite a number of other nations very capable of doing exactly what our very capable men and women in the Royal Canadian Air Force have done.

However, it is now Canada's opportunity and its mission to step up to this conflict so the people on the ground have some chance of success.

Therefore, we have put before the House a mission which says that we will triple the number of trainers, advisers, and assisters. We will double the amount of intelligence capability. We will put into the theatre a medical capacity. We will put into the theatre helicopters so our people are much more able to transport themselves if necessary.

We have, as a nation, welcomed 20,000 refugees into our country since this government was elected, taking them out of this conflict zone. We have committed to engaging in a more robust diplomatic engagement because a lot of bridges were burned by the previous government. We have stepped up on the humanitarian component of this message. This is a whole-of-government approach. That is what we need at this time.

The Conservatives have taken the position that they agree with everything except the bombing.

The NDP, on the other hand, agrees with the humanitarian, it agrees with the refugees, it agrees with a more robust diplomatic engagement, but somehow or other it thinks that we can do all of that without any military component to the mission. I welcome it to that thought.

However, it is not as if ISIL is in fact a very pleasant group of people to deal with. It is one of the worst forms of terrorist organizations, and a military response is absolutely necessary.

I look forward to the opportunity to engage in this debate when it resumes.

• (1825)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): When this matter is taken up again, the member will have 5 minutes and 44 seconds to complete his speech.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, the potential sale of Rona to American giant Lowe's has a lot of Quebecers concerned.

The first issue is that while Rona has hundreds of small hardware stores across the province, Lowe's is an expert in big-box stores. Since Lowe's paid twice the price to get its hands on Rona, some are worried that it will shut down smaller stores to increase profits and finance its takeover bid. Today, hundreds of business owners are worried and need some reassurance.

The second issue is the head office. A head office is where all of the important decisions are made, which is very important when people want to retain some control over their own economy. Rona's head office employs 1,000 people in Boucherville. It generates another 1,000 jobs for all kinds of professionals, including accountants, lawyers, computer experts, and marketers. Two thousand good-quality jobs are directly dependent on Rona's head office. However, that is not all. Since Rona is a Quebec company, it buys from Quebec companies. Rona makes almost half of its purchases from Quebec suppliers and 84% of its purchases from Canadian suppliers.

According to the Quebec government, 50,000 jobs in Quebec, especially in manufacturing SMEs, depend on Rona. In Canada, that number is 90,000. These jobs existed because Rona was a Quebec company, decisions were made here, our business people had direct access to the company's buyer and, furthermore, they could speak to him in their own language. That is what the purchase by a large southern U.S. chain is jeopardizing.

Adjournment Proceedings

Lowe's made many promises in order to get its hands on Rona. Lowe's promised to continue working with Quebec suppliers; it promised not to move the corporate headquarters; it promised not to get rid of all the small hardware stores. That was what it had to promise to get its hands on Rona. Such a well-established organization is worth some concessions. However, there is one thing that Lowe's did not promise, and that is to keep its promises. There is no such requirement at present. The Government of Quebec has no legislative or regulatory power to protect Quebecers in this transaction. That power belongs to the federal government. It can approve or reject the sale and, more importantly, it can attach conditions. It can ensure that Lowe's keeps its promises and that tens of thousands of jobs will not be jeopardized.

The Competition Bureau needs to examine this transaction. In this regard, the Competition Act is clear. The process exists and its criteria are clear. There is no political interference. No one can meddle in the process. As for the Investment Canada Act, however, that is another story. Department officials will be the ones doing the analysis, and we will never see it. The minister can then do as he pleases. The question I asked him on February 4 was simple: "Will the minister commit to imposing conditions to protect our SMEs and protect economic activity in Quebec?"

My question was simple, but sometimes I think things get lost in translation. The proof is that he replied, "We will make sure that we follow the process."

There is no process. Once department officials have examined the file, the minister can do as he pleases. The decision is up to the minister and to him alone. It is purely political.

I will therefore ask the question again. Will the minister commit to imposing conditions to protect our SMEs and protect economic activity in Quebec?

• (1830)

Mr. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the comments by the hon. member for Joliette regarding the proposed purchase of Rona by Lowe's.

First, I would like to remind members that, much like trade, foreign investment is an important driver of globalization and is essential because it gives economies access to global value chains. That is why Canada is open to investments that create jobs, growth and long-term prosperity for Canadians.

The Investment Canada Act is the framework that allows us to guarantee that foreign investments meet that objective. The act sets out that any significant investment, namely the acquisition of control of a Canadian business with assets that exceed the threshold under the act, must be reviewed to determine whether the investment is likely to be of net benefit to Canada.

The net benefit review threshold for private sector WTO investments is currently \$600 million in enterprise value. The review threshold for WTO investors that are state-owned enterprises is \$375 million in asset value.

In order to determine whether an investment project constitutes a net benefit for Canada, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development assesses the investor's plans and undertakings based on the six criteria set out in section 20 of the Investment Canada Act. They include:

- (a) the effect of the investment on the level and nature of economic activity in Canada, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the effect on employment, on resource processing, on the utilization of parts, components and services produced in Canada and on exports from Canada;
- (b) the degree and significance of participation by Canadians in the Canadian business or new Canadian business and in any industry or industries in Canada...
- (c) the compatibility of the investment with national industrial, economic and cultural policies, taking into consideration industrial, economic and cultural policy objectives enunciated by the government or legislature of any province likely to be significantly affected by the investment;

These criteria are clear indicators for investors, who often submit their plans based on those criteria.

The department determines the net benefit for Canada on a case-by-case basis. There is not one sole determining factor. Some criteria may be given more weight than others, depending on the nature of the investment and the circumstances surrounding it.

The process for assessing the net benefit is thorough and, if necessary, involves consultations with the provinces and territories affected as well as with the government departments or agencies with responsibilities in the sector involved in the transaction.

With regard to the proposed takeover of Rona by Lowe's, I would like to assure the House that the minister will thoroughly and carefully review the proposal submitted by Lowe's in accordance with the procedure set out in the legislation—

• (1835)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order.

The hon. member for Joliette.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, one would swear that the member got Kafka to write his notes. Unless there was a translation error, it seems as though the government is pretending not to understand.

Since Quebec is merely a province, Canada controls foreign investments within our territory. I realize that Rona is a Quebec company and the rest of Canada could not care less about it, or so it seems, but at least Canada could pretend to show some concern for Quebec, even just a little, as a common courtesy.

While I am talking about 50,000 jobs, the member is talking about the process and quoting the act. We can read the act; we know it well. What we do not know is the minister's intentions. Rona shareholders, who have to decide whether to sell the company, also do not know his intentions.

Even the Quebec government, which has asked the minister to protect jobs, does not know the minister's intentions or the criteria involved in his decision, which is purely arbitrary, I would remind hon. members. The process he talked about is purely political, and the minister can do as he pleases.

I will ask my question for the third time, and I hope the third time is the charm. Will the minister commit to imposing conditions to protect our SMEs and protect economic activity in Quebec?

Adjournment Proceedings

Mr. Greg Fergus: Madam Speaker, I am new here in the House of Commons. I do not know if my colleague is in a similar position, but I do know that he is sitting next to the dean of the House of Commons, the most experienced man in the House.

I am sure that his colleague can explain to him that the Investment Canada Act states that the process is not political; it is independent of the government. The evaluation is conducted independently. That is important. We have to have a group that can evaluate the process to determine if there is a net benefit to Canada.

That is why there is no need for me to provide reassurances because our government can certainly ensure that there will be a process. The law prevails, and the bureau will review the situation.

• (1840)

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, my two questions arise out of the government's climate change agenda.

On January 29, the environment minister met here in Ottawa with her counterparts from across the country and announced very little. She simply announced that work was ongoing to try to establish a pan-Canadian framework to address Canada's climate change challenges.

In conjunction with that announcement, she also made a bold statement that it was the first time that environment ministers from across Canada had gathered together for over 10 years. We went back and checked the record and that was not quite true. On the minister's own website, in fact the website of the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment, there is a press release dated June 23, 2015, in which the ministers confirmed that they met in Winnipeg in June of last year to discuss the specific issue of climate change.

First, would the parliamentary secretary correct the erroneous record that was established by the environment minister?

My second point goes to the root of the transparency the Prime Minister talked about during the election. In the lead up to the Paris climate change conference and shortly after he was sworn into office, the Prime Minister dropped a bombshell on Canadians. He said that he would be paying over \$2.65 billion to address climate change, not in Canada, but in foreign countries. He made that announcement not in Canada but in Malta of all places.

Canadians fully expect that before the present government spends money abroad on climate change initiatives, it should come forward with a plan, a pan-Canadian framework, to address climate change. They also expect the first investments to be made in Canada to address that challenge, not spent around the world.

It gets worse.

We are now finding out in dribs and drabs that the \$2.65 billion the Prime Minister promised is to be paid over a five-year period. In the final year of that period, \$800 million will be paid to foreign agencies to address climate change issues in other countries.

Canadians were not told that the expectation was that Canada would continue to make these payments beyond the five years, going into the billions of dollars. Even worse, this program is to be made permanent. In other words, Canadians are committing under the green climate fund and under the commitment by the Prime Minister to make these payments in perpetuity.

Could the parliamentary secretary confirm that the meeting that the minister had with her counterparts this past January was not the first time that ministers of the environment have met to discuss climate change in over 10 years?

Second, could the parliamentary secretary confirm that this five-year plan to pay \$2.65 billion to foreign countries to address climate change is going to become a permanent annual program for payments all around the world to address this issue?

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Abbotsford for his questions and for this opportunity to speak about this government's transparent, substantive, and collaborative plan to meet our national and international commitments to address the critical issue of climate change.

Climate change is one of the pressing issues of our time, and it is also one of the greatest opportunities. Effectively meeting this challenge will require leadership from federal, provincial, territorial governments, as well as municipalities and indigenous organizations.

Canadians voted for a government that said it was serious about addressing climate change. They know, as we do, that delaying action on climate change is as costly as it is short-sighted.

Our government's strategy regarding climate change involves establishing national emissions reduction targets while providing flexibility for the provinces and territories to design policies that meet these commitments. Each province and territory is already taking important steps, steps that were taken solely at the provincial level because of a decade of Conservative inaction at the federal level.

When the minister spoke with respect to the meeting with territorial and provincial counterparts, she was effectively stating that this is a government for the first time that was intent on actually pursuing climate change in an effective way.

Adjournment Proceedings

Our government's strategy also includes robust international engagement. Only a few short weeks after our government was sworn in, we played an important role in the historic Paris negotiations. In Paris, we brought together indigenous leaders, provincial and municipal representatives, industry, and youth, all to be part of establishing our commitment to the global fight against climate change. That includes working with developing nations to address their development challenges and mitigating greenhouse gas impacts as we work toward domestic reductions. In that context, the Prime Minister's commitment to the next five years was made.

We in this government are proud of the critical role that the Minister of Environment and Climate Change played on behalf of Canadians in the achievement of the Paris agreement.

As the hon. member noted, in late January, the minister met with her provincial and territorial counterparts. The meeting was an important step in the development of a pan-Canadian plan for addressing climate change, a plan that will be transparent and representative of all Canadians. At the meeting, ministers discussed their views on some of the key issues and opportunities that must be addressed under an effective pan-Canadian framework. Ministers also looked at the greenhouse gas projections for Canada for 2020 and 2030. With a decade of inaction behind us, it is very clear that significantly more must be done if we are to meet our international commitments.

At this meeting, environment ministers recognized that the only way to ensure a transition to a clean-growth economy and to a cleaner, more sustainable future is for all levels of government to work together, something once again that the previous government failed to understand.

At the meeting of federal and provincial environment ministers, Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change worked with her colleagues to frame the work to be done going forward and to lay the groundwork for convening a first ministers meeting within 90 days of the Paris climate change conference. This was a campaign platform commitment and is a key next step in the development of an effective pan-Canadian framework.

On March 3, the Prime Minister will join provincial premiers in Vancouver to discuss this subject. This meeting will focus on developing a pan-Canadian framework and the opportunities Canada has to become a global leader in clean growth, and to deliver responsibly on our environmental and economic commitments.

Indeed, this government very clearly understands that to build prosperity in the 21st century, we must understand that the environment and the economy go hand in hand. For example, clean technology is one of the fastest growing sectors in the world. It will be a critical part of our approach to combatting climate change and

will form a key part of our economic strategy. I know this industry well from a personal perspective. I spent the last 20 years as a CEO and senior executive in this industry.

Clean technology offers tremendous potential in growth, entrepreneurship, and innovation as we move on a global basis towards a lower carbon economy. Our government's commitments to the development of a comprehensive strategy for the development and deployment of clean technology will not only contribute to lowering our greenhouse gas emissions, but will also be a significant driver of economic prosperity for decades to come.

Climate change is a very significant challenge, one that we must effectively address for the sake of our children, our grandchildren, and our planet. It is something that will create enormous opportunities for us. Through the pan-Canadian approach, which prioritizes consultation and collaboration, we will effectively meet that challenge.

• (1845)

Hon. Ed Fast: Madam Speaker, that was all nice and good, but the parliamentary secretary did not answer either one of the questions I put to him.

I will ask again. Will he correct the record here that the previous government did have environment ministers from across Canada and our federal minister, Leona Aglukkaq, meet on June 23, 2015?

Second, could he confirm that this five-year \$2.65 billion foreign climate change payment is actually only the first instalment of ongoing commitments that the Government of Canada is making to support climate change initiatives outside of Canada?

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, I think I actually effectively addressed both of the questions that were put by the hon. member.

The minister was speaking to the fact that this is the first government in the past decade that actually is serious about commitments with respect to climate change and is engaging the provinces in multilateral meetings to address this in a serious way.

With respect to the commitment that the Prime Minister made, he made a commitment over a five-year period. That is for a five-year period, and we will take it from there.

• (1850)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): 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 6:50 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, February 17, 2016

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Draguignan Bar Association	
Mr. Fortin	1005
Place des aînés Seniors' Centre	
Mr. El-Khoury	1005
John Simcoe Awards	
Ms. Leitch	1005
Kenneth Lefrançois	
Mr. Schiefke	1005
Housing	
Mr. Rankin	1006
Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada Awards	
Mrs. Shanahan	1006
Ron Southern	
Mr. Liepert	1006
North Vancouver	
Mr. Wilkinson	1006
Tidal Power	
Mr. Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	1006
Bruce Power	
Mr. Lobb	1007
Black History Month	
Mr. Bittle	1007
Kingston	
Mr. Gerretsen	1007
Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Clement	1007
Victor Goldbloom	
Mrs. Mendès	1007
Massimadi Film Festival	
Ms. Laverdière	1008
Canadian Forces	
Mr. Bezan	1008
Victor Goldbloom	
Mr. Housefather	1008

ORAL QUESTIONS

National Defence	
Ms. Ambrose	1008
Mr. Trudeau	1008
Ms. Ambrose	1008
Mr. Trudeau	1008
Ms. Ambrose	1009
Mr. Trudeau	1009

Finance	
Ms. Ambrose	1009
Mr. Trudeau	1009
Employment	
Ms. Ambrose	1009
Mr. Trudeau	1009
Mr. Mulcair	1009
Mr. Trudeau	1009
Mr. Mulcair	1009
Mr. Trudeau	1009
National Defence	
Mr. Mulcair	1010
Mr. Trudeau	1010
Mr. Mulcair	1010
Mr. Trudeau	1010
Mr. Bezan	1010
Mr. Sajjan	1010
Mr. Bezan	1010
Mr. Sajjan	1010
Mr. Clement	1010
Mr. Dion	1011
Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Clement	1011
Mr. Alghabra	1011
Mr. Kent	1011
Mr. Dion	1011
Mr. Kent	1011
Mr. Dion	1011
International Trade	
Ms. Ramsey	1011
Ms. Freeland	1011
Ms. Brosseau	1011
Ms. Freeland	1012
Finance	
Ms. Raitt	1012
Mr. Morneau	1012
Ms. Raitt	1012
Mr. Morneau	1012
Mr. Deltell	1012
Mr. Morneau	1012
Mr. Deltell	1012
Mr. Morneau	1012
Rail Transportation	
Ms. Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	1012
Mr. Garneau	1013
Mr. Dubé	1013
Mr. Garneau	1013
Natural Resources	
Mrs. Shanahan	1013
Mr. Carr	1013

Ms. Bergen	1013
Mr. Carr	1013
Ms. Bergen	1013
Mr. Carr	1013
Mr. Bernier	1013
Mr. Carr	1014
Mr. Bernier	1014
Mr. Carr	1014
Justice	
Ms. Trudel	1014
Mr. Casey (Charlottetown)	1014
Mr. Garrison	1014
Mr. Goodale	1014
Natural Resources	
Mr. Sorenson	1014
Mr. Carr	1014
Air Transportation	
Mrs. Block	1014
Mr. Garneau	1015
Employment	
Mr. Barlow	1015
Mr. Carr	1015
Canada Revenue Agency	
Mr. Graham	1015
Mrs. Lebouthillier	1015
Intergovernmental Relations	
Mr. Scheer	1015
Mr. Morneau	1015
Pensions	
Mr. Caron	1015
Mr. Morneau	1016
Small Business	
Mr. Fragiskatos	1016
Ms. Freeland	1016
Justice	
Mr. Rayes	1016
Mr. Blair	1016
The Environment	
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	1016
Mr. Trudeau	1016
Presence in the Gallery	
The Speaker	1016

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Interparliamentary Delegations	
Mr. Hoback	1017
Safe and Regulated Sports Betting Act	
Mr. Masse (Windsor West)	1017
Bill C-221. Introduction and first reading	1017
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	1017

Income Tax Act	
Mr. Ste-Marie	1017
Bill C-222. Introduction and first reading	1017
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	1017
Petitions	
Physician-Assisted Dying	
Mr. Arnold	1017
Natural Resources	
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	1018
Experimental Lakes Area	
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	1018
Questions on the Order Paper	
Mr. Lamoureux	1018
Motions for Papers	
Mr. Lamoureux	1018

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Canada's Contribution to the Effort to Combat ISIL	
Mr. Trudeau	1018
Motion	1018
Mr. O'Toole	1019
Mr. Garrison	1020
Mr. Dhaliwal	1020
Mr. Bezan	1020
Ms. Ambrose	1021
Amendment	1023
Mr. Trudeau	1023
Ms. Laverdière	1024
Mr. Scheer	1024
Mr. Dion	1024
Mr. Mulcair	1025
Mrs. McCrimmon	1026
Mr. Doherty	1027
Mr. Cullen	1027
Mr. Dion	1028
Mr. Dion	1028
Mr. Genuis	1030
Ms. Laverdière	1030
Mr. Dhaliwal	1030
Mr. Obhrai	1031
Ms. Benson	1031
Ms. Gould	1031
Mr. Bezan	1031
Mr. Long	1034
Mr. Stetski	1034
Mr. Clarke	1034
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	1035
Mr. Dion	1035
Mr. Sajjan	1035
Mr. Kmiec	1037
Mr. Garrison	1037
Mr. Whalen	1038
Mr. Abouttaif	1038
Mr. Garrison	1038
Mr. Obhrai	1038

Mr. McKay.....	1040
Ms. Boutin-Sweet.....	1041
Mr. Chong.....	1041
Mr. Dhaliwal.....	1041
Mr. McKay.....	1042

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Foreign Investment

Mr. Ste-Marie.....	1042
Mr. Fergus.....	1043

The Environment

Mr. Fast.....	1044
Mr. Wilkinson.....	1044

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