

Speech by Hon. Deepak Obhrai, P.C., M.P. at the
Debate on the Motion to extend the Canadian military mission
in Iraq against ISIL

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House of Commons, Ottawa

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights, CPC):

Mr. Speaker,

I am pleased to have this opportunity to discuss the continued crisis caused by the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Levant, known as ISIL, which is an ongoing crisis and critical international issue.

I want to add a personal dimension to this debate.

I grew up in multicultural countries such as Tanzania and India before I arrived in Canada. In Tanzania, my best friend, whom I treated as a family member, was a Sunni Muslim. His name is Shakot Malik. In India, close friendships developed during my school years with members of the Muslim community. Here in Canada, members of the Sunni, Shia, Ismaili and Ahmadiyya have all been strong supporters and personal friends. Let me name a few: Naseem Mahadi, Albert Elkadri, Ray Sarout, Nagah Hage, Moe Amery, Moe Suliman, Jamal Rafai, Mohammad Rasheed and Mohamod Yasin.

Why do I say these names? It is because they are outstanding members of the Muslim community who have strongly contributed to making Canada the best country in the world.

There are a few others I can also name: Dr. Habiba Chakir, a leading scientist; and Nasreen Ali, with whom I held a symposium a few years ago here on Parliament Hill called "Women in Islam". I will also soon have one as a family member too.

We are proud of the contributions made by these great Canadians. I also had the privilege to represent Canada abroad and made strong friendships with Muslims from across the globe. They are all outstanding citizens of the world.

Therefore, it is wrong to say that ISIL represents Islam. ISIL is a bunch of murderers. What its members are doing is definitely against Islam. They kill the innocent, they rape women and they target minorities. Terrible stories have come out of Syria and Iraq where ISIL is in control. Let me say how barbaric they are. They even kill their own who disagree with them.

The Economist magazine in a recent issue captured what members of ISIL are doing. They are spreading Fear. The international community has not only an obligation but a

responsibility to stop the murderous rampage of these barbaric individuals who take pride in killing.

Over 60 countries have come together to stop these atrocities being committed where ISIL has a presence. Why? Because we all believe we not only have an obligation but a responsibility toward the innocent victims of ISIL.

May I remind the House that it was Canada that spearheaded the discussion at the United Nations “the right to protect” following the Rwanda genocide. It proposed that when a state fails to protect its people, either through a lack of ability or a lack of willingness, the responsibility shifts to the broader international community.

ISIL has already arrived on the shores of Canada. I have talked to Christianne Boudreau, whose son Damian Clairmont died in Syria. We have lost two soldiers here in Canada by individuals brainwashed by ISIL propaganda.

Our security service continues to disrupt those who choose to target Canadians. We have to stop them.

ISIL members are headquartered in Syria, where they hide, because they know they will not be attacked. Well, we had said many times that Assad must go. That remains our position. Assad must go, but ISIL must not find shelter in Syria. Hence, this resolution authorizing extending the mission in Syria on ISIL, before it becomes a global threat, is essential.

I will remind members that ISIL is already present in Libya, Nigeria and Yemen. Recently we heard that ISIL is targeting American soldiers in the United States by naming them. I fail to understand the logic of opposition parties that fail to see the threat.

Recently, the Liberal candidate in Calgary Forest Lawn said that we should not be in Iraq. We should not be fighting ISIL. This, from a police officer who spent his entire career helping innocent victims. Why is he blind to helping innocent victims of this terrorist organization? Even Pope Francis has said that ISIL must be stopped.

As my friend Goldy Hyder said, “why should we remain idle when there are those who are trying to destroy everything we believe in--we love”. Canada will not stand idle.

However, ISIL members must also face justice. They must be held accountable, otherwise we will give rise to more terrorist groups creating more havoc for peaceful societies around the globe.

I am very proud when I go to Remembrance Day events held in my riding where people stand with pride of how they fought for democracy, how they fought for human rights, how they fought to ensure countries remain free. These are people who gave their lives.

Contrary to what the Liberals are saying, this is the same party that without debate sent Canadian soldiers into Afghanistan because they felt it was the right thing to do. They did not even bring the debate to the House that this government is doing so that they can talk. As far as the NDP is concerned, we know from the debates we had on Afghanistan the NDP would oppose anything. They even opposed World War II, where the whole world was fighting evil.

This government, contrary to what the NDP is going to say, contrary to what the Liberal members are saying, we are going to stand for the long Canadian tradition of helping innocents around the world. When peace is threatened around the world, Canada will be there. Canada is going there. I am very proud to support this resolution.