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Chair

Mr. Dean Allison

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● (1100)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC)): Good morning.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), this is our study of Canada's response to the violence, religious persecution, and dislocation caused by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIL. We will get started.

I want to explain the way that we're going to work with our witnesses today.

Right now, joining us here in Ottawa, is Tarek Fatah, who is a founder of the Muslim Canadian Congress. Welcome, sir. We're glad to have you here today.

Sitting next to him is Salim Mansur, associate professor at the Department of Political Science at the University of Western Ontario. Salim, welcome to you, sir.

And joining us by video conference is Sami Aoun, who is a full professor at the University of Sherbrooke.

Mr. Aoun can only be with us for the first hour. We will go quickly to get another witness who will join us by video conference from Virginia.

We'll go with our three opening statements, and then we'll start our rounds of questioning. As I said, after one hour we will change our video conference and then continue with the questions. I mention that so that if there are any questions for Mr. Aoun, we will make sure we do that in the first hour.

Mr. Fatah, we're going to start with your opening statement. Then we'll move over to Mr. Mansur and finish with Mr. Aoun.

Welcome, sir. I'll turn the floor over to you.

Mr. Tarek Fatah (Founder, Muslim Canadian Congress): Thank you very much.

Members of the committee and ladies and gentlemen, thank you for inviting me to share my views on a subject that's very close to the hearts and minds of those of us who are Muslim Canadians and who came here to flee the hell that's unfolding in Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, Somalia, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, or wherever.

Unfortunately, we Muslims are a majority community. Some of us are canaries in the mine. We have been warning the democratic world, whether it was India, Israel, Australia, or Canada, of the danger of Islamo-fascism, Islamism, radical Islam, or whatever one

wishes to define this death cult as, and whose prime victims, by the way, are fellow Muslims.

Unfortunately, very few in the west have cared to admit that they do not understand the challenge they face and, in their overconfidence, have at times been taken to the cleaners by those who seek the end of civilization as we know it. Allow me to share the words of America's top general in charge of special forces units in the Middle East and whose task is to combat the self-declared Islamic State that's the ISIS terror army. Major General Michael Nagata is reported to have twice confessed last year that the Obama administration has no idea what the group ISIL or ISIS is all about. He's quoted as having told a group of outside experts during a conference call in August, "We do not understand the movement, and until we do, we are not going to defeat it. We have not defeated the idea." Then he said, "We do not even understand the idea."

The continued popularity of ISIS in Iraq and Syria and throughout the Arabian Peninsula, and in South Asia as well as Central Africa, has perplexed American military strategists. Some have compared the death-seeking jihadists of ISIS to the militant animal rights activists or environmental lawbreakers, while many apologists of Islamism try to trivialize the dangers we face by comparing ISIS to Timothy McVeigh, the cultists of Waco, Texas, or even the Baader-Meinhof gang and the Italian Red Brigades of the 1960s.

ISIS, in fact, is a far more deadly foe. That is what General Nagata as a military man found wanting in the briefing he received from those who are highly paid consultants and ensure that presidents and prime ministers in many western countries keep repeating the mantra that Islam is a religion of peace and that Islam has nothing to do with Islamism. If General Nagata found ISIL's capacity for rallying teenage and twentysomething Muslim men and women to its cause baffling, he was not the only one, though I must say he's probably the only one honest enough to admit it.

I'm here to thank the Canadian government for the measures it has taken to fight the good fight. I'm not a Conservative and have never voted Conservative, but my critique comes from the left. Of course, we are aware that we in Canada are a mid-sized power and cannot steer the ship of counter-jihad on our own, and at a time when the United States is paralyzed by the inaction or ill action of two successive presidents from both sides of the political rainbow, both of whom have shown abject subservience to the primary power that has given birth to the death cult of Islamo-fascism. Be it Boko Haram, the Taliban, al Qaeda, or ISIS, it's the same halal wine in different bottles, meant to confuse all of us in the west.

On the surface, these countries—or this country that I'm referring to—are our allies, but in reality, it is the opposite. My finger of accusation is pointed at the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its foundational doctrine of what is popularly known as Wahhabism of the 18th century, but which in reality is centuries older. It is based on a very simple idea, which is that life on earth is a fleeting phenomenon and real life actually begins after death. They say that this world is best treated as an airport transit lounge where we wait to catch the flight to our final destination that's paradise—but only after an end-of-time scenario that will not happen until the entire world is ruled by a single Islamic caliphate and after even the stones and trees will join Muslims in an effort to wipe out non-Muslims, especially Jews.

● (1105)

To some of you this may sound like a kindergarten fantasy, but trust me, ladies and gentlemen, this is not because of a lack of education; I have never met an uneducated or illiterate jihadi. No farm or factory worker has blown himself up. It's the educated who are leading ISIS. It was a student of the prestigious London School of Oriental and Asian Studies who beheaded Daniel Pearl when beheading was not such a common phenomenon. It is Islamist Ph.D. s from Oxford, UCLA, U of T, and McGill who believe in the supremacist and racist view of the world. It is Islamic studies departments of Ivy League universities where the most radical of Islamists prowl. For them, this quest for Islamist supremacy on earth as a precondition to the end of times is a serious matter of fate and politics.

Without confronting these academics and imams of Canada's mosques, those who lead and those who lead Islamist organizations, and having a vigorous debate that denigrates the doctrine of armed jihad and rejects sharia law as outdated and unfit for a nation-state, we will not succeed no matter how many men and women we send overseas to defeat ISIS. However, having said that, not sending any military to fight this evil will be seen as an act of surrender by our enemies.

Members of Parliament, the war against malaria can only be won if you drain the swamps where mosquitoes breed. Shooting down one mosquito at a time will not work. I will suggest to you five steps that need to be taken in conjunction with our war effort in the Middle East.

One, we take away the charitable status of mosques where imams pray every week, in every mosque, for Muslim victory over non-Muslims.

Two, we refuse to permit mosques that put women at the back of the bus and that preach death for gays.

Three, we suspend immigration from Somalia, Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia until we are assured that the men and women coming here are committed not to the Muslim Brotherhood of Shabaab, Hamas, Hezbollah, and Jamaat-e-Islami, but to a separation of religion and state, gender equality, liberal democracy, and, dare I say, social democracy and the equitable use of a nation's resources for common development.

Four, Canada initiates with its allies work for the expulsion of Turkey from NATO. We are in a situation where our most secret endeavours are monitored by our worst of enemies right where we plan.

Finally, and above all, we need to send a message that Canada will not move back to medieval times simply to accommodate a group of people desiring to live in a medieval environment. To do this, may I suggest we follow what the French have done and ban the burka in public. Only when we are seen as being strong and not afraid of the terrorists of ISIS and the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood will our troops be successful in defeating the enemy. Otherwise, the failure of America in Iraq and Afghanistan awaits us.

War without understanding the enemy can only inflict casualties and damage on the enemy, leaving it on a higher moral ground amongst its own base. But when war is waged as part of an ideological offensive that exposes the fascists and hate-mongers for who they are, we will succeed, just as we overcame the Nazis in the Second World War and the Communists in the Cold War.

Thank you very much.

● (1110)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Fatah.

We'll now move over to Mr. Mansur.

Dr. Salim Mansur (Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Western Ontario, As an Individual): Mr. Chairman and honourable members, I want to begin by thanking you for inviting me to speak to you as a Canadian who happens to be a Muslim.

As an academic with a focus on international relations studies and area studies of the Middle East and south and southwest Asia, I have been writing and speaking as a public intellectual on matters related to what the late Professor Samuel Huntington of Harvard so presciently warned about in his book *The Clash of Civilizations*. Huntington's warning was made in the early 1990s. More than a dozen years after radical Muslim terrorists attacked New York and Washington on September 11, 2001, the western powers, including Canada, remain in various stages of denial of the war that Islamists declared against the west and have been waging across the Arab-Muslim world.

The issue at hand is Canada's role as part of the U.S.-led coalition to degrade the Islamist terrorist organization ISIL, or IS. Operation Impact, while politically and militarily significant, is nevertheless relatively small and of limited duration. I support the mission. I laud Parliament for authorizing this mission. We need to be cautiously realistic, however, given the scope and terms of the mission. There have been some concerns and criticisms raised in regard to how the mission has handled its task within a fluid situation of an ongoing war in the region, and these, therefore, in my view, lack credibility.

Realism demands a more forthright assessment of not only this mission but also beyond it, an assessment of the manner in which Canada has evaluated the nature, capacity, and objectives of radical Islam, political Islam, or the Islamist threat regionally and globally. Canada is not alone in demonstrating a lack of coherent assessment of the threat of Islamism, or political Islam. The striking fact is that a coherent threat assessment of Islamism is missing in the foreign policy of all the major western powers. There is reluctance, even fear, to describe who the enemy is, against which the western powers, including Canada, have deployed military force.

ISIL is not simply a terrorist organization that has carried out with shocking audacity heinous atrocities in the region historically known as the Fertile Crescent. ISIL is not simply the most recent version of Hulagu Khan, a grandson of Genghis Khan, the Mongol leader of a ravaging army that laid waste to this region and its capital, Baghdad, in the 13th century. ISIL, or now IS, gleefully, capriciously, and mockingly has gone on a rampage, destroying religious sites of immense historical interest and systematically plundering, raping, and slaughtering men, women, and children in ancient communities of Christians, Yazidis, and minority sects in Islam. We are witnessing genocide not for the first time in this region.

ISIL is fuelled by the ideology of Islamism. We need to fully grasp the meaning and objective of this ideology, as we in the west once did when confronted with Soviet Communism. This is essential if we are to put forward a coherent policy instead of band-aids to contain and defeat what ISIL represents. Islamism is the ideology of armed jihad, of waging war by any means available to enforce sharia rule in Muslim majority countries and seek sharia compliance by democracies in the west for Muslim immigrants.

ISIL is the latest incarnation of Islamism, the ideology of political Islam constructed by the Egyptian founder of Muslim Brotherhood, Hasan al-Banna, in the 1920s, and by the south Asian founder of Jamaat-e-Islami, Abul A'la Maududi, in the 1940s. In effect, Islamism is the third surviving totalitarian movement from the 20th century that confronts the modern world of freedom and democracy.

ISIL has risen from the ashes of al Qaeda in Iraq. Its current leaders, including Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the self-declared caliph of the IS, were al Qaeda warriors and henchmen of the maniacal murderer Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who was tracked and killed by American forces in 2006. The difference between ISIL and al Qaeda is that the former, unlike the latter, has managed to carve out a shell state over an expansive territory that spills over the borders between Syria and Iraq as a nucleus of a future Islamist state.

• (1115)

Given the limited time I have, I want to draw your attention to the following facts.

Some 14 years since 9/11 and the war on terror initiated by the American-led coalition in Afghanistan and Iraq, the reality on the ground in the greater Middle East and beyond is Islamist terrorism remains robust and expansive. The claims made by the Obama administration in Washington following the killing of Osama bin Laden in 2011, that al Qaeda had been effectively destroyed, were unreal. Islamist terrorism as a globally oriented movement has proven to be highly adaptive, flexible, and opportunistic organiza-

tionally in recruiting jihadists and using modern technology, arms, and the media for broadcasting its terrorist activities and goals. Islamist parties and militias, as in Pakistan or Nigeria and elsewhere, have shown their efficacy in infiltrating and degrading institutions of governance in their respective societies and pushing forward their agenda of sharia rule.

The Islamist ideology of ISIL is shared by a large segment of Arab and Muslim populations and can hardly be differentiated from the Wahhabi and Salafi ideology of the ruling elite in Saudi Arabia. Compulsion and religion, Islamic triumphalism and non-compliance or rejection of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights are a commonly shared value of ISIL and most Arab states, including non-Arab member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, or the OIC.

Finally, the relative success of the global Islamist movement based on the organizing principles of Islamism as an ideology, as once the global communist movement was based on the ideology of communism or Marxism-Leninism, has spawned homegrown terrorism in the west among second- and third-generation immigrant Muslims and non-Muslim converts enticed by Islamism. This phenomenon of homegrown Islamist terrorism since 9/11 poses clear and present danger to the domestic security of western democracies, as we have witnessed recently in Canada, Australia, and France. Consequently, we in Canada and the west need to urgently recognize the lack on our part of a coherent understanding of Islamism and Islamist terrorism as a means by which Islamists seek to advance their aims.

The absence of a coherent understanding of Islamism makes for the absence of a coherent strategic policy to contain and defeat it. Such a coherent policy if adopted would be somewhat akin to the policy that the west, led by the United States, adopted soon after the Second World War ended in 1945 to contain and eventually defeat the Soviet Union. This was a containment strategy or policy conceived by George Kennan and adopted by the Truman administration. Canada was an important partner of the western alliance led by successive American administrations, Democratic and Republican, during the nearly five-decade-long strategic commitment to contain the former Soviet Union.

You urgently need to take a page from that history if you are serious about the threat Islamism poses to the Middle East and beyond and if you're going to commit yourselves, provided we truly care about freedom and democracy, to contain and defeat the forces of this totalitarian movement in our time. If the west, including Canada, is unwilling to invest in a coherent strategy to contain and defeat Islamism, then the public needs to know.

In our contemporary world, the west is not insulated against the war raging within the world of Islam. Islamists and apologists for Islamism are in our midst and have duly infiltrated western institutions to degrade and subvert liberal democracy. They have been skilful in manipulating the west's liberal democratic values for their aim. They have exploited multiculturalism to push their agenda of sharia rule in Canada, Britain, France, and elsewhere in the west.

• (1120)

We may not want to be involved against Islamism and declare that none of this is our problem. History, however, is merciless in pointing out that those who appeased the enemies of freedom and democracy in the hope that they would be saved from the impending peril—for instance, of Nazism or Communism—only made the cost of eventually defending freedom and democracy immensely greater than it would have been, had more robust actions been taken sooner rather than later.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Mansur.

Via video conference, we'll now go to Professor Aoun in Montreal, Ouebec.

Welcome, sir. The floor is yours.

[Translation]

Mr. Sami Aoun (Full Professor, Université de Sherbrooke, As an Individual): Mr. Chair, honourable members, ladies, gentlemen, dear colleagues who have just testified, thank you.

In reply to the question submitted by the committee, here is the perspective I propose: let us try to see why the Canadian reaction at the international level was and is limited in its consequences, and is subject to the constraints of the choices made by its allies, especially those of the Obama administration. However, the sovereign reaction here in Canada remains open and promising. It can perhaps affect matters in a more interesting way, thanks to the credit and more positive balance sheet Canada has to draw on.

Firstly, with regard to the dual Canadian reaction, i.e. both diplomatic and military, there has been an unfortunate shift in Canadian diplomacy. At the start of the Arab Spring, and even in the beginning of the Syrian conflict and the Iraqi political deadlock, Canadian diplomacy was much more focused on containing what has been called the emergence of the Iranian superpower and its expansion into Iraq, Syria and all of the Levant.

Secondly,this may have provoked or helped the attempt to overthrow the Assad regime in Syria by impacting its legitimacy, which explains the Canadian diplomatic decision to declare Iranian and Syrian diplomats personae non gratae.

However, since the emergence of the Islamic State group, we have noted a fairly important shift in the direction of Canadian diplomacy, which is now more focused on this barbaric situation. That said, it must be understood that the Islamic State group, despite its horrors and barbaric nature, was born of regional and local frustrations, whether in Syria or in Iraq. It is an unfortunate, blinded and blinding attempt to respond to a certain remodelling of the Iraq and Syria borders along ethnic and sectarian lines.

In that sense, the Islamic State group, with all of its attendant horrors, is a late product of the relative and current failure of the Arab Spring and its attempt to bring about modernity and liberal democracy. In fact, in Syria and Iraq, rather than seeing liberal and democratic reform, Sunnis et Shiites are embroiled in a sectarian war, commonly referred to as the fitna. Moreover, there is something even more destructive and menacing going on. In Iraq, in Syria, and elsewhere in the Middle East, a proxy war is raging between the two great powers in that region, that is to say Saudi Arabia, representing Arab Sunni rather fundamentalist and antidemocratic positions, which played a counter-revolutionary role during the Arab Spring, and Iran, which supports and works to strengthen the Shiite communities and has the imperial ambition to dominate that space, that Arab Muslim territory.

In that sense, Canadian diplomacy is limited and constrained in dealing with that situation, since Canada is not an important or powerful actor in the Middle East.

There is also another important point. It is highly improbable that on the Middle East in general, and against the Islamic State in particular, Canada will have its own distinct and independent policy, separate from that of the Obama administration.

In that sense, the Obama administration has a clear choice: it can change its strategy and let the conflict in Iraq and Syria expand, let the situation deteriorate, provoke conflicts among all of these enemies, whether we are talking about pro-Iranian Shiite militias, Hezbollah or the Asaib Ahl al Haq group, or Al-Nosra, al-Qaeda or its latest version, which may be the most barbaric, the Islamic State group.

• (1125)

Canada is caught in that situation. In addition, Canadian diplomacy is limited because what is happening appears to be a multi-level war among Muslim factions.

As I said, the first level involves Shiites and Sunnis, Iran and Saudi Arabia and others, but especially, the allies of the United States and the strategic west. I will mention the rivalry between Turkey and Egypt as an example. On the one hand, there is Turkey and Qatar that support the Muslim Brotherhood and political fundamentalism, and on the other, there is Saudi Arabia and Egypt that support another political Salafism. This may be described as a cold war or a hot one, but it is taking place among Muslim fractions, which means that the Canadian intervention is limited by definition.

The Israeli government, which is the main actor in the region, also has the choice of letting the self-destruction rage on in Syria, in order perhaps to avoid the strategic threat the Syrian regime had become at a certain point. For the moment it prefers to play according to the perspective that the Syrian conflict is becoming self-destructive and that the Islamic State group, according to Israeli strategic and military assessments, is not a direct threat, but a potential one. For the Israeli government, the most important thing is that the conflict remain in its theatre, i.e. Iraq and Syria. It has not really chosen to adopt a policy that would seek to overthrow the Assad regime or to intervene directly in some overt way.

The Islamic State and fundamentalists in general currently have the wind in their sails, and as such millions of Arabs have been subjugated by the fundamentalist and sectarian ideologies, from Yemen to Bahrain, Lebanon, Iraq and Syria, and others. The arrival of the Islamic State group and of the political fundamentalist ideologies destroys the social link among citizens and provokes the collapse of the states and borders, even artificial ones, that exist between countries.

Allow me to say here that internally, Canada certainly has some major obligations to respond to this phenomenon, which has global, expansive ambitions.

Canada is caught in what is referred to as Karl Popper's well-known paradox of tolerance. If people show absolute tolerance even toward the intolerant, and do not defend the tolerant society against assaults by the intolerant, the tolerant will be annihilated, as will their tolerance. This idea helps me to submit measures, observations, approaches or recommendations.

First, Canada has the obligation to consolidate the pillar of the Canadian social contract, built on the reciprocal independence of state and religion, with tolerance toward both, by consolidating civic values.

Secondly, in a public debate between citizens and Canadian elites, there has to be a discussion to put an end to the double exploitation of politics and Islam. That is a crucial point. To do so, we have to encourage debate between Canadian elites and others elsewhere in the world, especially those of the Muslim world, regarding the importance of democratic values and the peaceful value of civic, liberal democracy, os opposed to getting embroiled in fundamentalist wars.

I will also point out that in the debate in Canada a distinction is not easily and readily made between terrorism, despotism, and authoritarianism. These three elements can feed into each other, and that is why they must be defined separately.

As to interpreting the ideologies at play, the understanding of Salafist jihadism is accurate. It is threatening, it is barbaric, and it is inhuman.

● (1130)

However, one must hope that Islam will tolerate another school of thought that will be more rooted in liberal democracy and modernity. On the legal front, perhaps we need to close any loopholes the terrorists may take advantage of in terms of human rights. We have to apply policies and possibly create observatories or more well-defined chairs on the issues of radicalization and deradicalization, and put an end to the legal uncertainty in Canadian culture with regard to the glorification of violence, exclusion and hate.

The terrorism practised by the Islamic State group, and the horrors of despotism which may be considered by Canada as a tactical, non-existential threat—and that is a debatable point—are an existential, strategic threat for the people of Iraq and the Levant. In that sense, Canada cannot remain impassive and not rise to the defence of the values of modernity.

● (1135)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much, Professor Aoun.

Just as a reminder, colleagues, we have Professor Aoun with us for this hour only.

We will now start off our first round of questions.

Madame Laverdière, you have seven minutes, please.

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I also thank the witnesses for appearing before the committee.

Thank you, Professor Aoun. I have two questions for you. One concerns the situation in the Middle East, and the other relates to what Canada can do.

Concerning the situation on the ground, in the Middle East, all of us are of course concerned by the funding that comes from governments, organizations and individuals and is feeding the conflict in Syria and Iraq. I would like you to tell us more about the funding and the arms being provided to the Islamic State group.

Do you have any comments to make on the issue of borders in that region? Since they are quite porous, there is traffic in weapons and oil. I would like to know your opinion about that.

Mr. Sami Aoun: Thank you, Ms. Laverdière.

In this regard, funding certainly plays an important role. It comes from two or three external sources, especially from Arab Sunni governments. I am referring here more particularly to the Gulf countries, whether it be Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates or Kuwait. That is well known. It is an open secret. On the other hand, Turkey provides quite extensive logistical support. As you said quite correctly, the borders are porous.

That said, they do have some resources, oil in particular as well as the revenue from taxes and ransoms. In that sense, there is a certain funding. However, I should make a brief comment about that. The Islamic State group is barbaric, but you have to see the situation as it is perceived in the street and by Arab Sunni governments. They are disoriented by the break in the American strategy and what was the hobby horse during the cold war, i.e. political fundamentalism, especially combative, jihadist fundamentalism.

Moreover—this is an observation and not necessarily a value judgement—unless I am mistaken, I think that a large majority sees this conflict as a just cause. Their Arab Sunni brothers are in their opinion mistreated by the Alawite Assad regime and its alliance with the Persian-Shiite Iran regime, as well as by the allies of Shiite Iran who govern Baghdad, and have marginalized certain Sunni leaders and parties.

As I was saying, the Islamic State group was born of that sectarian, denominational frustration. Some could accuse western countries, including Canada, of applying a double standard. On the one hand, they declare that the Islamic State group is barbarian or terrorist, but on the other, they ignore the activities of other militias, in particular those of Asaib Ahl al Haq. That is how things are seen from the inside.

As concerns your question on the porous borders, there is a lot of pressure on borders drawn up at the San Remo Conference of 1920. One hears more commonly about borders defined by the Sykes-Picot accords of 1916.

For the Islamic State group and its supporters, as well as a very well known and measurable political trend in the Iraqi and Syrian Arab Sunni communities, there is a de facto Kurd state. An Alawite state is being created, as well as a Shiite state. So they are wondering where their state is. In that sense, the Islamic State group caused borders to fall long after other countries did so, whether we are talking about Hezbollah militias or those of Asaib Ahl al Haq, or Sunni fighters from Lebanon, Iraq or elsewhere.

On that point, borders are indeed porous. According to the most prevalent utopic visions, i.e. pan-Arabism or pan-Islamism, those borders are seen as having been drawn by the west. So it is not considered a great tragedy when they fall. In that sense, the Islamic State group responded to expectations. You have to look at its constitution. First, there are former officers of the army of Sadam Hussein. There are also tribes and clans with Naqshbandiyyah or mystical tendencies, as well as the successors of al-Qaeda such as Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, heirs of all of that Islamic jihadism that is well known.

● (1140)

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: As you know, United Nations resolutions 2170 and 2178 ask us to counter incitement to terrorism by working, among others, with educational, cultural and religious institutions.

In your opinion, what can the Government of Canada do to support that effort?

Mr. Sami Aoun: It could certainly work on helping newcomers to understand citizenship and democracy. Sometimes there is an open wound within communities of the diaspora in general, and especially, in the case at issue, in Muslim communities. Because of their origins or their conception of politics, they find it hard to believe that they have the status of equal and free citizens. On this point, there is still what might be called an apologetic attitude. These people are always on the defensive and do not easily tolerate self-criticism.

On this, we can say that the Canadian values of liberalism in general, as well as those of democracy as an outgrowth of modernity, mean that Canadian priorities do not always align with those of traditional cultures, especially those where religion is dominant. I would like to make the following points about that, which are important. The primacy of individual liberty is not necessarily accepted. Indeed, it may be considered a community freedom, but it can also happen, depending on the political culture involved, that liberation is considered superior to liberty.

Moreover, the Canadian state is in fact secular, noncommittal concerning religious matters. Even if its Constitution includes a quote on the existence of a divinity, the other parts of it mean that in Canada one has the right to believe or not believe, and to promote one's belief or lack of one.

This allows for criticizing the sacred, and religious texts and institutions. In terms of priorities, there is an important difference when it comes to criticizing that which is sacred. Sometimes we do not know on which aspects of the sacred practitioners in general and believers, especially Muslims, will not tolerate criticism, and which can according to them be criticized or subject to debate.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Aoun.

Mr. Anderson, go ahead for seven minutes.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I also want to thank our guests for being here with us today.

Given some of the news we have heard recently and what you said, Mr. Mansur, the goal or the objective needs to be to isolate and contain. Here in Canada, is there a need to isolate and contain? We've talked about this at committee. Is radicalization taking place in any mosques or teaching facilities in Canada, in your opinion?

Dr. Salim Mansur: The short answer is yes. A great many mosques right across Canada, North America, and Europe are basically the incubators of political Islam. They support, in a sense, the values that ISIL represents.

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Fatah, would you agree with that?

Mr. Tarek Fatah: Absolutely.

In fact, I would go a step further. If you have, say, 1,000 mosques in this country and at every Friday congregation all the imams are praying for the defeat of non-Muslims at the hands of Muslims—and we as the taxpayers are contributing to the upkeep of those charitable institutions, and members of Parliament are quite willing to attend these events at the mosques—then 14 years is a very long time for people to wake up. It is happening every day.

On the morning when Jews were slaughtered in Paris, a Toronto imam was talking about the supremacy of Islam defeating all other religions in Canada and, needing no translation, he said that is why the disbelievers hate us. That was in English.

The Muslim Association of Canada was recently exposed through a number of reports in the Quebec press. It has a network of properties; it is a major landlord; and it is directly connected with the Muslim Brotherhood ideology of Hassan al-Banna as openly stated on its website. Many of us who are Muslims are astounded that the rest of Canada is simply walking in a minefield ignorant of what's happening. Every one of us knows, even those who act as if they don't. There is not a single Muslim who doesn't know what is going on not just in mosques but in every academic institution that we have from urban high schools to universities. Every office of the MSA is a Muslim Brotherhood office in Canada. MSA is the Muslim Students' Association.

● (1145)

Mr. David Anderson: So if I were to suggest to you that you should apologize for suggesting there is radicalization in Canada, what would you say to me?

Mr. Tarek Fatah: I would say whoever made that suggestion should see a physician, not come to me.

Mr. David Anderson: Okay, thank you.

I just want to talk a little bit about containment internationally. We heard this morning even in the testimony words like "extreme expression of Islam" and "barbaric" when referring to ISIL, but also the professor pointed out that many people in the area see ISIL as a just cause. I am just wondering, again starting with Mr. Mansur, when we see polls in these countries that seem to indicate there is strong support for the principles of ISIL if not for a specific activity, and when it is often supported by governments, how we deal with this. You're talking about isolation and containment. The example you used took several decades to be successful.

Do you have any suggestions?

Dr. Salim Mansur: I'm glad you picked up on the idea of containment. The issue here, in a very short space of time, is that the Arab Muslim world and the region where ISIL is, at the heart and the core of the Arab Muslim world, is in huge, immense historical turmoil. There are all sorts of cross-cutting cleavages and relationships. Sectarian inter-tribal warfare has exploded. States are decaying or have failed. We are witnessing that. If you look at it and at the failed states indexes, we can see that the top 20 failed states in the world are basically Muslim states in this region.

What does that mean? There is no centre there holding the states together, and anarchy has been let loose.

The ideology of ISIL, the political message of ISIL, is wrapped in religious colours or in religious language, and that's what the people in the west are having difficulty understanding. But any student of Islam and Islamic history and Islamic politics, as we are, can clearly see that the ISIL ideology takes them back to the Middle Ages and, even beyond, to the earlier period in which we talk about the Salaf, the ancestors of Islam, the first few generations of Islam. They are committed to taking the world back to those ideas. These ideas are not simply those of ISIL.

Mr. David Anderson: I'm going to need your solution quickly here, because the chair is going to cut me off in a couple of minutes. I'm sorry to interrupt you, but the solutions, from our perspective—

Dr. Salim Mansur: With regard to the solution, the containment idea is that we cannot change the direction of this war that is going on inside the Arab Muslim world. They have to work it out. This is their problem. What was containment in 1947-48 when the Berlin blockade took place? We couldn't go inside eastern Europe and change it, but we had to contain them so they did not infect us. We are talking about the whole gamut of containment. We have to think about that. It is not our interference that is going to bring about democracy and secularism and liberalism. This has to be worked out by the Muslim world itself.

This is an intergenerational problem. We have to be honest with ourselves that we cannot do anything about it. We have to then think

about what we must do, and containment is the idea of sealing ourselves off from that part of the world.

(1150)

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Fatah, do you agree?

The Chair: Be very quick, please.

Mr. Tarek Fatah: I would take very practical measures. As I have suggested, we need to suspend immigration from failed states. When I say "failed states" I mean states that exist: Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, and Somalia. We need to identify very clearly any religious institutions in which men, dressed in medieval garb, are attacking non-Muslims under the cover of religion. We need to shut down charitable status to send the message. We know what has worked in France, and we know what has not worked in the U.K.

Unless we follow the French example, we will have a serious problem over here in educated, upper-class Muslims pretending that they are being discriminated against and blaming the United States, Israel, and the Jews for all the problems they have.

The Chair: Thank you. That's all the time we have. You can pick that back up in a future round.

Mr. Scarpaleggia, sir, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

There's obviously a lot of food for thought here. I would like to go back a bit. I'm trying to understand as best I can what each witness is advising.

You're asking for a strategy of containment, not interference. Going back in time now, how do you view President Bush's war in Iraq? How do you view that in terms of your analytical framework that you've put forth here today? Was it a good thing, a bad thing...?

Dr. Salim Mansur: Well, if you're asking me about the events of 2003, I would say that it was a necessary thing. It was a necessary thing to get Saddam Hussein and the regime changed, as it was in Afghanistan, and it was done with the full understanding or the belief that once this dictator, this tyrant, was removed, the suffocating people of Iraq would begin to breathe once again and, with the support of western democracies, they would move forward.

To some extent they did that, but what was not anticipated, unlike the previous experience of regime changes in the world, and there are a number of them.... I come from a part of the world where a regime change took place. If it hadn't taken place, genocide would have continued. That was in 1971 in the war between India and Pakistan. The Indian military went and—

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Right.

Dr. Salim Mansur: The point is, what was not anticipated was how the Arab world would react and also how the west would react.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: I'm just curious as to how your focus on non-interference relates to what you think of that situation.

Mr. Tarek Fatah: May I add something?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Yes, sir, go ahead.

Mr. Tarek Fatah: I would differ with my colleague here. I think the 2003 intervention was a catastrophe. It undermined the moral authority of many of us who spoke. It was a mistake for which we are paying a very huge price.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Okay. I don't want to go further with this—

Mr. Tarek Fatah: I'm just putting it on the record.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: —but thank you. I appreciate the comment. It's useful.

I'm really interested in radicalization in Canada. We know, for example, that the RCMP works with imams. It works with mosques to try to root out or discover certain individuals who may be going down the path of radicalization. We've seen some imams basically turn over or turn away some individuals who had some very radical ideas and might have been quite lost in their thinking. Do you think the RCMP is doing enough within these programs that are meant to liaise with mosques?

Also, I was reading the other day that there are radicalized individuals in prisons and that perhaps efforts in prisons to deradicalize these individuals should be upgraded. That's one question. I'm also very interested in your thinking about how an individual, a young person who essentially becomes a convert and who has no Muslim roots or antecedents, becomes infected by something they see on the Internet. In your mind, how does that work? I think we're all trying to figure that out, because that in many ways seems to be what Canadians are concerned about.

From both of you, actually, I'd appreciate your thoughts on those aspects of radicalization and what the government can do to counter that phenomenon in Canada.

• (1155)

Dr. Salim Mansur: Very quickly, on the question of the RCMP and police forces across Canada, the public outreach program, in my opinion, is highly questionable and problematic. The public outreach program has been an outreach to the very groups that carry the virus of Islamism, that preach the ideology of Islamism. I'm talking about public outreach to the mosque imams, the various Islamist organizations, student organizations like MAC, the Muslim Association of Canada, ISNA, and so on.

We have a situation in the country where our public institutions are inviting these people in to instruct us as Canadians on how we should behave in terms of dealing with minority religion, in terms of gender, and so on and so forth. I think that's a lesson to be taken.

Mr. Tarek Fatah: I would suggest to you that it is one of the major mistakes made by the current administration in authorizing what is called "de-radicalization" which, in fact, is radicalization. We have an incident where someone working very closely with the RCMP took it upon himself to go to Qatar, meet with the leadership of the Taliban and then come back over here and pose with the single-finger salute, on camera, including the mother of the dead jihadi who converted to Islam and died in Syria.

Unless and until this very racist and stereotypical image of what is a Muslim is changed, you will never be able to meet Muslim architects, Muslim comedians, Muslim engineers, maybe even Muslim strippers. You will not even know what 90% of Muslims look like. The only people all political parties reach out to are those who "look like" Muslims, who dress up that way, who have an obsession with facial hair or the covering of hair, and who dress up as if they are living in Saudi Arabia. People like Salim or myself are just not ugly enough to be considered authentic Muslims. So we are never approached. In 14 years, the RCMP has never talked to any one of us, despite the fact I've been writing a column. He's an author, I'm an author. No, the only Muslims the RCMP and CSIS talk to are those who lie to their face, feed them 30 nights in Ramadan, and then win them over. We are being fooled.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

That's all the time we have for the first round. We're going to suspend for one or two minutes.

Professor Aoun, thank you very much for joining us.

We'll just suspend so we can get the next teleconference in.

• (1155)
_________(Pause) _______

● (1200)

The Chair: I just want to welcome, joining us from Falls Church, Virginia, Ayad Jamal Aldin, who is the former deputy of the Iraqi Parliament and also a scholar. Glad that you could join us.

We're going to get you to make some opening comments. We've been in session now for about an hour and we're going to finish off the last hour. We've got a couple of other guests here so sir, I'll turn it over to you for your opening remarks and then we'll continue with our second round of questioning and continue on for the next hour.

Sir, the floor is yours.

Mr. Ayad Aldin (Former Deputy of the Iraqi Parliament, As an Individual) (Interpretation): Greetings. I'd like to thank you for inviting me to attend the Canadian Parliament.

In fact, the world today is very occupied with counterterrorism, and it is obvious that many countries are contributing to the fight against terrorism in Iraq and Syria specifically.

Counterterrorism is currently focused on one group of terrorists: ISIL or ISIS. As for the rest of the terrorist groups in Iraq and Syria, it doesn't seem that anybody is confronting them. In my estimation, the problem is that we have a war against an armed group, but unless we all take the initiative and come up with a definition of terrorism —a legal, specific, and clear definition—this is not enough. Terrorism is not only the armed groups that are outside the law but also an ideology and a doctrine. It is obvious that the United States, as well as many other countries—approximately 60 countries -are bombarding ISIL, but there are thousands of mosques and other media like TV, radio, newspapers, and websites that continue to produce terrorists. What would push somebody—a young man who lives comfortably in America or Canada or Europe or anywhere else-to go and fight in Iraq or Syria? What would push a young man to go and commit a suicide operation in Iraq? What would push a young French man to go and conduct a suicide operation in Iraq or Syria? The motives are religious, cultural, and intellectual. This is why I say that terrorist culture and the jurisprudence and doctrine of terrorism are what produce terrorists who fight here or there. Unless we confront the terrorist ideology, we will not be able to stop the strong wave of terrorism that is attacking our world.

There are oil-producing countries that are also producing terrorism through their mosques, their institutions, their universities, and their media. The social culture is also producing terrorism in those countries. Those terrorism-producing countries are protected by the United States and its allies. So there's something that's not clearly understandable here. Why would America and its allies attack ISIL but protect the producers of ISIL? Why are they focusing only on ISIL, but they're leaving the Jabhat al-Nusra or the al-Nusra Front, which is the twin brother of ISIL? Why attack ISIL but overlook the Taliban in Afghanistan and Boko Haram? There are many names for one product that is Islamic terrorism. Unless we can specify and define what that terrorism is.... Not all Islam is terrorism, but there are cancerous points in Islam that have to be dealt with in order to stop the production of terrorism at its roots. Lastly, attacking those armed terrorists is not enough. We also have to define terrorism, to have a legal definition, and focus on intellectual, cultural, and religious terrorism in order to uproot it.

Thank you very much.

● (1205)

The Chair: Thank you very much for your opening remarks.

We're going to continue on with our second round, beginning with Mr. Hawn and then Mr. Dewar.

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair

Thanks to all of you for being here. Shukran.

Mr. Fatah, I'm going to start with you and then go to Mr. Mansur afterwards. The Russians, the Germans, the Japanese, and the Chinese, all those people, or the vast majority, are peaceful, lawabiding people, but that didn't stop those regimes from collectively killing hundreds of millions of people in history. The vast majority of Muslims are peaceful, law-abiding people. Some say that 10% of them are the limit of the violent minority. Of course, that's about 160 million people, so it's pretty significant.

I recently listened to and chatted with a woman named Karima Bennoune. I don't know if you know her. She's Algerian. She grew up in Algeria. Her father and her family were activists against fundamentalism. They paid the price. She is now a law professor at the University of California, Davis. Her point was—as my point has been to Muslims I know—that unless the majority peaceful Muslims start taking part and standing up to the violent minority, we're all screwed, including them. She has written a book called *Your Fatwa Does Not Apply Here*, which I'm in the process of reading. It's about the stories of 300 or so people, mainly women, who are actually on the front lines in those Muslim communities all over that part of the world and who are actively fighting that.

What can we do to encourage those kinds of people, and not just Karima Bennoune, but the people she talks about, to take up that fight within that community? Because if they don't do it within that community, it's not going to happen.

● (1210)

Mr. Tarek Fatah: Let me give you my impression of the Canadian Muslim mosaic. Our best estimate, as to who is saying what, comes from the survey done just after the Toronto 18 terror trial, in which 12% of Muslim Canadians thought the Toronto 18 were justified in the terrorist action they had planned.

Within the Muslim community we have very few academics or men of the cloth like our wonderful representative of the Iraqi government. It's such a pleasure to hear him. I wish there were more people like him. There are very few who are fighting for a separation between religion and state.

There are hardly any Muslim leaders who can stand up and say that the doctrine of armed jihad is disastrous for Muslims—forget about non-Muslims. Our problem comes from the inability of the western intelligentsia to deal with us as normal human beings.

I'll give you an example. Just two weeks ago, *The New York Times* produced a full-page ad by 23 Muslims from around the world, including former members of Parliament, Dr. Zuhdi Jasser, a retired lieutenant commander, and Naser Khader, who was a Danish MP, all of them declaring that the concept of the Islamic State is redundant and a challenge to modernity, and that if we don't fight it, we're doomed. There was not a single media outlet that wanted to talk to any of the Americans who signed it.

As a result, at the White House summit on violent extremism that's taking place on February 18, not a single one of those 23 signatories has been invited by the White House. The reason comes back to two things. There is the complete absence within the Muslim world of secular, liberal, non-religious Muslims as partners with orthodox conservative Muslims, as a moral compass rather than as a political force. On the other hand, those that you say wish to support...completely dismiss anyone who looks like my daughter, who works on CBC TV as a reporter, or my wife or my sisters, or my eight nieces, because none of them look like Muslims. If you cannot determine this racist bifurcation of the Muslim community as the pious and the impious, if that's a word, of the true Muslim and those like the professor and me, or the imam from Iraq, as the heretics.... If you don't do it, we have a catastrophe racing towards us.

I'll conclude with one thing. Please do not dismiss as frivolous the idea of educated Muslims who believe that this is a transit lounge, that the world has to come to an end before life itself can begin. Most people I talk to dismiss me for that, but this is true in every home, from the child going to a madrassa who is taught that. You'll have to be on the side of those who say "separation of religion and state" and "women's equality" and who say that if women are sent to the back they will not go to that mosque. The day you do that, we'll win.

The Chair: Thank you.

That's all the time we have, Mr. Hawn.

We're going to move over to you, Mr. Dewar, sir, for five minutes.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to our guests.

I want to start with a question for our new guest, Mr. Jamal Aldin, a former deputy in the Iraqi Parliament. With the rise of Daesh, some people within Iraq have had grievances, and whilst maybe people in Mosul and others weren't fully supporting Daesh, they were certainly sympathetic. Some people would claim that this was a result of the alienation of certain Sunnis and also that it was an issue of governance and inclusion. Certainly that's the point of view of our government, and I share the view that there should be more inclusion.

I was in Iraq in 2006 and I took part in a forum on federalism—which was a bit controversial at the time—and the idea was to have more inclusion. Pluralism was something that was talked about, which I believe should be talked about more. As one of our guests said, it can't come from us; it obviously has to come from those within the country.

In what ways can Canada help support governance and support strengthening what I think is a good idea, which is pluralism and fair representation? It seems to me that right now Daesh is taking advantage of the alienation that exists. How can Canada help with governance and capacity building within Iraq?

● (1215)

Mr. Ayad Aldin (Interpretation): Thank you. To answer your kind questions, I would start by saying that the public opinion, the culture, and the legal infrastructure in Canada are not easy to duplicate in Iraq or Syria or other places because there are cultural

differences and we have to understand and appreciate those differences.

I was an advocate of democracy and liberalism and the peaceful transition of authority. However, time has shown the failure of democracy in our countries. There is a religious and cultural and intellectual structure that refuses democracy, and the rising tide of terrorism in our regions is due to the weakness of the central dictatorial state. To be honest, perhaps we have our differences. After all the experiences I have seen in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, and Afghanistan, I have given up on what is called democracy. Democracy is not good for those people. What suits those people is dictatorial, military, German-style rule following Atatürk's model. Atatürk has had the only success in changing an eastern or a middle eastern society, Turkey, into a nearly western society. The Atatürk experience of secular and military dictatorship is the only one that has worked.

If we try to use something like the Canadian system of democracy and human rights.... Human rights are for those who respect human rights. How are you going to give freedom to those who do not respect human rights, who want to kill you? Please bear with me.

In the Middle East, ISIL has not done anything outside of Islamic jurisprudence. When ISIL killed people and sold their wives, that was not something new. Sunni jurisprudence and Shiite jurisprudence both agree that Yazidis have no right to live. Either they embrace Islam or they die. The jurisprudence, Sunni and Shiite, believes that atheists have no right to live. Either they embrace Islam or they die. In the jurisprudence of both Sunnis and Shiites, a Muslim who abandons his Islam should be killed. All Muslims welcome a Christian who converts to Islam, but the reverse would lead to death.

So there is a cultural structure, an intellectual structure, and Islamic jurisprudence has all these structures. You've never heard a Muslim saying that to kill a Yazidi is illegitimate, even the al-Azhar Islamic institution never said that, despite the fact that it is a moderate institution, which I respect. They all say that those Yazidis in Iraq should either embrace Islam or be killed. You know how the jurisprudence, Sunni or Shiite, divides human beings into Muslims, who have the right to live; Christians or Jews, who have the right to live but who are to be treated as half-citizens or second-class citizens; and others, who have no right to live. That applies to Chinese and to other people who are considered atheists.

● (1220)

The Chair: Mr. Goldring, go ahead for five minutes, please.

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC): Thank you, gentlemen, for appearing here today.

With regard to the aspect of containment, of course everybody is aware of the situation in Ukraine with Russia, and aware of how the European countries have come together, and the North American countries have come together to impose sanctions. Of course, the sanctions go only so far when you have a country like Turkey that ignores the sanctions and supplies Russia. There's no control over the sanctions if you break with your partner people and partner countries.

Mr. Fatah, during your talk you mentioned specifically that Turkey should be removed from NATO. Does this have something to do with why France and some other European countries were cool towards bringing Turkey into the European Union? Is it related to that? And why would you say that about Turkey? Do you have specifics regarding how it is supporting the terrorists that we should all know about?

Mr. Tarek Fatah: Well, Turkey was a member of NATO when NATO needed troops to send to Korea. It had a surviving army after the Second World War because it didn't take part in it. Turkey was essential to guarding the southern flanks of the Soviet Union.

Today Turkey is the leading force behind Islamism, both funding it, giving it refuge, and treating its ISIS soldiers over there. Plus, it is the prime backer of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and, in partnership with Saudi Arabia and Qatar, is the prime opponent of what we know as western civilization, to the extent that Turkey now claims that Columbus never discovered America, that it was some Turk who discovered it.

Irrespective of that, Turkey's hands are bloodied in a genocide with the Armenians. Turkey has killed Kurds with an abandon that the western world should be ashamed of because they looked the other way. Kurdistan has been occupied by Turkey for decades. The only people who fought ISIS were the Kurds.

Last week, we had a conference in London, where Turkey was present and the Kurds were not allowed. Even Canada today considers the PKK as a terrorist organization. So the people backing terrorism are allies, and the people fighting terrorism, on the books of our clerks and bureaucrats and officials, are our enemy.

The only way you can do this is if Turkey is out of the inner circle of NATO that is the target of the very enemy that is fighting it. We cannot do this by imposing sanctions on Russia but not on Saudi Arabia and Turkey. The sanctions you need to impose are first on Saudi Arabia, then Turkey, and then with the Russians you will at least be able to talk instead of having a war.

Unless and until you stand up to Saudi Arabia and the medieval monstrosity of the punishment of women and gays and blacks, an apartheid regime where blacks earn one-tenth of the salary of white Americans.... It's only present in Saudi Arabia with our support.

● (1225)

Mr. Peter Goldring: Would you not think that if you developed a strategy of countermanding the terrorist groups—and suppose that NATO took part in it and took up this strategy to develop it because they are the European and North American countries—would it not be best to have a country like Turkey represented on it? Would they not have credibility to be involved in helping to develop a strategy? Would they not participate?

Mr. Tarek Fatah: I would say no.

I know Turkey. I am a student of Turkish history, and I can tell you that there are two Turkeys, but Professor Mansur would be better qualified to shed light on that.

The Chair: Professor, for a very quick response because we have to move to the next round.

Dr. Salim Mansur: We can debate this issue about Turkey. Turkey is a divided country, and though the present regime of Erdogan is tending towards the direction that Mr. Fatah has described—and I agree with him—I think we should not lose sight of the fact that Turkey has a very large segment of secular Kemalist forces and that is an internal struggle that is going on.

We should be going back to the larger question and identifying and targeting our support for people who share our values.

If the chairman would give me a couple of minutes, or a minute more—

The Chair: We're going to have to come back to that, and maybe Ms. Brown will pick it up.

We are starting the third round.

Ms. Brown, the floor is yours.

Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. You are a tight timekeeper.

Mr. Fatah and Mr. Mansur, both of you have talked about the radicalization that takes place in mosques in our own country.

Could you educate me a bit? In a local mosque, I know of a family who, because of their own financial circumstances, would never have been able to afford a trip to the hajj, the pilgrimage. Who would supply the money, and how would those people be chosen to go? There was a family of eight people who attended. How would they be chosen?

Mr. Tarek Fatah: Islam doesn't require them to do hajj.

It's very simple. If you can't afford it you don't do hajj.

The money comes from Saudi Arabia. Part of it pays for the tickets and part of it is left over for administration. It's those administrative costs and the money laundering that takes place every Friday in the bags and the sacks that are carried on. They end up saying, "Oh, brothers, we collected \$67,000 today". That's how money is being laundered in a mosque.

Sending those hajjis over there impresses you. Did anyone tell you that Islam does not require anyone to do hajj if he or she has a single penny of debt?

 $\boldsymbol{Ms.}$ Lois Brown: Thank you.

Do you have any comments, Mr. Mansur?

Dr. Salim Mansur: Yes.

The money being raised from within and coming from outside is going into various activities within the community that showcase their social welfare in the broader sense. Behind that activity is the ideology preached from the pulpit or within the corporate body of the institution, whether it's the mosque institution or the mosque-related school institution. That is the ideology we're talking about. You have this witness over here who is an imam. He's dressed in an imam's garment telling you that the problem that we are faced with that our country, the west, does not understand is the jurisprudence of Islam, whether it is Shiite or Sunni. The jurisprudence of Islam is a human creation; it's not the Koran. The Koran has to be interpreted. The jurisprudence of Islam takes us back to the 12th, 11th, and 10th century. It was a totally different world. To understand the Taliban, to understand ISIL, even to understand the Iranian you have to go back to the 12th and the 13th century.

We are spawning the 12th and the 13th century mentality right here inside a community. We are a postmodern society. We are in the 21st century. There is a schizophrenic cultural reality in the Arab-Muslim world.

May I have another minute, Mr. Chair?

The question the gentleman raised...and this is what I need to tell you, is every equation has two sides. We are focused on ISIL, Islam, radicalization, and so on. We have forgotten the side of the equation that is the west. We have lost the confidence and the values of the west. What is our value? What is it that we fought for and defended? The gentleman over there raised the question about containment and about what's happening in the Muslim world. What's happening in the Muslim world we do not understand because we have forgotten our own history.

This year is the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta. Two years from now we will be celebrating a 150th anniversary but it will mark the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther pinning the 95 theses in the church at Wittenberg. Our democracy, our secular values, our liberalism, did not emerge overnight. It was a long and often bloody struggle with revolutions, the guillotine, and decapitation. We are seeing in virtual time, in real time, our history played out. That's where we talk about containment. We cannot go into Pakistan. We cannot go into Saudi Arabia or Iran to tell them how to...they have to discover it.

I was born in India. There was 200 years of British rule in India before the division. My friend also thinks of himself as an Indian though I was born in India. We are the world's largest democracy. It happened as a result of a long historical process. Britain stood with India for 200 years. Do we have the courage to stand with the men and women in the Muslim world who are fighting for values that we understand?

Very quickly, to one final statement on whom we should support. We need to target it. For instance, we give hundreds of millions of dollars to countries like Bangladesh. This is foreign affairs and international development. Could you, dear honourable member, would you put a condition on the money that you put to Bangladesh that not one dollar will go to Bangladesh unless they respect the right of free speech and the rights of women?

We have this woman, Taslima Nasrin. She's running from country to country. She cannot find a place to live because the Islamists are hounding her, all because she wrote a book. Salman Rushdie was lucky that he was in England, that he was protected. We can do that. We can send a message. That's the historical message we have to send

(1230)

The Chair: That's all the time we have.

Ms. Lois Brown: Could I just finish with one comment?

The Chair: Very quickly.

Ms. Lois Brown: On Saturday morning I happened to be watching the news and I just caught one statement that said democracy and Islamism are running in parallel and will never cross. I guess the statement is that the two of them are almost opposed to each other.

Dr. Salim Mansur: Here we are. Here I am.

The Chair: I'm going to have to cut both of you off actually.

We're going to try to catch you at future rounds.

Mr. Dewar, sir, the floor is yours, five minutes.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Thank you, Chair.

There are a lot of absolutes being thrown around and I just want to maybe bring us back to the fact that, as a committee, we're trying to make recommendations to government as to what we should be doing. I want to go back to a question my colleague asked a previous guest witness on our obligations from the United Nations Security Council resolutions 2170 and 2178, which aren't often talked about. It's basically on financing and on our role to deal with radicalization here

I'm hearing from witnesses that we should be looking at where money is coming from here in Canada and being sent abroad and making sure that we're doing our job. That's fine. I'm also a little confused though because I appreciate what, Mr. Fatah, you're saying about going to certain people and not others.

Just for the record, you probably know this, but we have members of our caucus who are Muslim women and who, whatever you want to call it, I forget how you're putting it, look like you or your daughters and whatnot. I think we should be careful not to overstereotype because there are people who are.... It's a diversity and the community is diverse. I do understand your concern about who we confer with but I also want to put on the record that we have people who happen to be members of Parliament, doctors, lawyers, etc., and Muslims, just like myself as a politician who happens to be a Catholic.

It should not be the ultimate focus but it should be something that we connect with to help us understand how to deal with various communities where people are involved. So I'm not sure.... I take exception and I'll put aside your ideas on immigration. I do have concerns about Saudi Arabia, and it's on the record, in terms of us selling arms to them.

But when it comes to actually dealing with and taking on our responsibility, do you not believe that there has to be some engagement with religious communities and mosques to connect with the very people who we're concerned about being radicalized? The RCMP has a list. We know that. We also want to make sure that the list isn't going to grow. In fact, we want to make sure that if anything that list is going to eventually be zero. But at the end of the day how do we connect with people who we are concerned are being radicalized if we're not actually engaged with faith leaders?

● (1235)

Mr. Tarek Fatah: To begin with, the New Democrat members of Parliament who are Muslim share the same views as I do. They are members of Parliament primarily as politicians not because they're Muslim

Mr. Paul Dewar: Correct.

Mr. Tarek Fatah: We just ended up over here. I didn't come to Canada to be a Muslim. I came from Saudi Arabia to get away from the atrocities over there. So I have deep respect for not only the women but the gentleman, my namesake in your caucus, who is also.... They have a French background. They have a North African background. They know this but they are unwilling to get engaged with us, or maybe your caucus doesn't allow it for them. The only people New Democrats are engaging with are—you know it and I know it—the Maher Arars and the Monia Mazighs of this world. I dare say that in this entire struggle we didn't hear a word of where they stood on the various terrorist organizations within Syria.

But coming to your point of how to engage, I do not have to engage with Nazis to fight Hitler. I fight them and I defeat them. The whole notion that there is no truth, this post-modernist notion that everybody has a point of view, would only be valid if the people coming to this country would be standing up and owning up to the oaths they took and not send women to the back of the bus or not declare that gays have to killed.

I can assure you, and your members of caucus would bear me out, that no more than 10% of Canada's Muslims are linked with any mosque. In Toronto, we have half a million Muslims, 50 mosques. On Good Friday, the only day where there's no obstacle to going to a mosque, 450,000 of them stay home.

In RCMP....

Mr. Paul Dewar: I appreciate your point, and I entirely disagree with you about whether or not any of our caucus members should or shouldn't talk to anyone. That's up to them.

Mr. Tarek Fatah: But they don't talk to us.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Well, these are individual freedoms, my friend.

Mr. Tarek Fatah: I understand.

Mr. Paul Dewar: We all have the right to talk and not to talk.

I'm trying to get an answer from you on how we engage with people in the community somewhere. What I'm hearing you say is don't talk to anyone—

Mr. Tarek Fatah: No, I didn't say that. Don't put words in my mouth.

Mr. Paul Dewar: —and get rid of all the bad people somehow. I don't know what you.... Do you have a magic wand or what?

Mr. Tarek Fatah: Sorry. I didn't say that.

The Chair: Just give a quick response.

Mr. Paul Dewar: I just need to know what you would prescribe to this committee as to what we could do.

Mr. Tarek Fatah: Yes, I would prescribe that you do not meet with people who want to take Canada to the 12th century. I'm suggesting to you that—

Mr. Paul Dewar: So, we'll put them aside. Who should we meet with, besides yourself?

Mr. Tarek Fatah: To the people you call Islamophobes every day, to the people you insult as Muslims, like him and me, that you declare to be right-wing lunatics, Islamophobes, and neo-conservatives—

Mr. Paul Dewar: I don't think I said any of those words—

Mr. Tarek Fatah: Mr. Dewar, just a second.

The Chair: Let's all....

Please be very quick.

Mr. Tarek Fatah: You asked a provocative question. I need to answer it, sir.

Mr. Paul Dewar: I asked you a very direct question.

Mr. Tarek Fatah: No, you didn't.

Mr. Paul Dewar: I'll let the record stand.

Mr. Tarek Fatah: Forget the record. You accused us. The New Democrats accuse anyone who opposes imams, mullahs, and Islamists as right-wing, neo-conservative Islamophobes. There is a reason why you would employ Islamists in your office. There's a reason why people in your office—

(1240)

The Chair: I've got to interrupt. We're over time. We may get back to you with another question.

We're going to Mr. Hawn.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: This question is going to Mr. Mansur. I'm going to get a couple of points in because I have a feeling I will only get one kick at this.

We've talked about diversity, yes, and we've talked about how complex this is. But does it really come down to a difference or a clash between humanity and barbarism?

I'll mention a couple more specific things. We've talked about the mosques and so on. Where that is happening, how do we act in terms of outing them, in terms of charitable status, without the inevitable howls of racism coming forward?

The third thing is that the Taliban in Afghanistan would tell you that "you may have the watches, but we have the time". Will radical Islam eventually use democracy to kill democracy?

Dr. Salim Mansur: There is no democracy within the Arab-Muslim world. The instances of democracy—

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Will they use what they can get away with under our democratic system? Will they use that to eventually kill democracy in Canada?

Dr. Salim Mansur: Well then you're coming back to this side of the equation precisely. That's what our worry is. That's what's happening in Europe. The numbers are increasing. They are pushing their ideology. We ourselves are wavering upon who we are and what we represent. We are allowing them to push us. We are reaching a tipping point. That's exactly my fear, and maybe my colleague's fear. So yes, it can pretty much ruin democracy.

Let me be frank, sir. The accommodation that is taking place is one-way accommodation and then the pendulum might swing the other way. The first people who are going to be hurt are the very Muslims who have been pushing this thing. That's the historical fact from our previous century. We are worried about that, so we need to stop it happening now. We need to assert our values now, and we should say, "Enough is enough. You people have a choice to make. Either you start assimilating into the culture where you chose to come, or you go back to the culture that you cherish."

Hon. Laurie Hawn: I couldn't agree more.

We've talked about the evolution of societies and humanity and so on. In Christianity, people did a lot of bad things in the name of Christianity centuries ago—the crusades and so on. Christianity grew up; Christianity matured. This may sound like a radical question, but is it time for Islam to mature and become human?

Dr. Salim Mansur: I tell it to my students in the following way. Christianity has a history of over 2,000 years, as we are in the 21st century. Jews have a history of 5,000 years. And Muslims have a history of 1,400 years. What that represents is that Christians have become adults. The Jews are past their middle age and sober and have gone through empires and defeats and seen it all. The Muslims are getting into the full-blooded testosterone of the teenager. That's what we have to understand in a civilizational sense.

Yes, Muslims will have to grow up. We have to pinpoint who we need to support. The very struggle that is going on, without getting into specific detail, which is sweeping across the Arab-Muslim world, is the struggle, the analog of the struggle that went on with Christians growing up.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Thank you.

To go back to what I mentioned about the mosques and the imams, I take what's been said. Without making a generalization about all mosques and all imams, where there is inappropriate activity going on in mosques or by specific imams, how do we...? I totally agree with taking away charitable status and support and so on. But how do we do that without, as I said, the inevitable howls of outrage about racism? How do we do that?

Dr. Salim Mansur: We do that by, first of all, stopping giving those imams Jubilee medals.

I mean, I come from London, a city where we have two mosques. Given its population ratio, London has become infamous. We had youngsters travelling all the way to eastern Algeria. You all know the details. We have these imams who are playing a double game. They stand up in the pulpit...and I am a witness to that.

Imams have been stopped from travelling across the United States because their names, post-9/11, were unacceptable. Then we have our political leaders in the community hanging around with these imams and pinning them with Diamond Jubilees. Where do you then expect the common Muslim to turn around and look? It's not only the medal; we have our police force inviting these imams to don police uniforms. Who will our youngsters, our people, go to speak to when they can see the difficulties?

● (1245)

The Chair: Thank you very much. That's all the time we have.

We'll start our fourth and final round with Mr. Scarpaleggia, and then we'll finish with Mr. Anderson.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Thank you.

You know, there's been talk about competing jurisprudence based on competing values and competing views of the world. There's been talk about relativism in the post-modern world. But when I look at Canada, I see as sort of one of our fundamental truths the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which is based on small-l liberal values that, as you mentioned, Mr. Mansur, have been acquired through a lot of bloodshed over centuries and so on.

I'm just wondering what you think the charter's impact can be in terms of acting as a buttress, I guess, against any ideology that is blatantly or profoundly illiberal. For example, you seemed to suggest there were Islamists in the higher reaches of academia and so on and so forth. But law schools produce lawyers who study very hard the jurisprudence of Canada, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the values that are incorporated in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Is there not reason for optimism that in our educational system the charter, if we celebrate it properly, will instill a new way of thinking? People don't remain static through generations, or even in a lifetime.

I'm wondering if you think that the charter and our legal system, in all of its aspects, can act as a buttress against values that are inimical to small-l liberalism.

Dr. Salim Mansur: You're right, and that's the dilemma we are facing. No political philosopher, or no political philosopher of any substance, would say that a constitution is also a document by which a people will commit suicide in the sense of allowing our liberal value of tolerance to go to the extent that we empower the intolerant to destroy our tolerant society. This is the dilemma of the small-l liberal society that we are faced with.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: You're essentially saying that we shouldn't apply the charter, or that the people applying the charter today, the Supreme Court, are somehow not rigorous thinkers.

Dr. Salim Mansur: Well, the Supreme Court will have to decide whether those who are pushing for sharia enforcement and sharia compliance and acceptance of sharia law in Canada are going against the very values of the charter, and whether we accept this. That's for the Supreme Court to decide. For us as citizens—

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: But you have faith in the Supreme Court.

Dr. Salim Mansur: Yes, I have the faith in the Supreme Court that they will make their decision, and hopefully the right decision. We came very close to seeing sharia law being pushed in Ontario. I have faith in the liberal democratic culture, that we turned it around, we pushed it back. But we can only push it back right from the Supreme Court and the PMO, down to the members of Parliament and senators and our civil society, provided we stand together.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: We don't take a top-down view of our democracy. It's not the PMO that tells us—

Dr. Salim Mansur: Oh, what I meant are the institutions of government—

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: But it's from the ground up. It's from the ground up but governed by the Charter of Rights—

Dr. Salim Mansur: Absolutely, but—

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: —and it imbues values in the young people studying to become lawyers. It imbues the small-l liberal democratic values that we fought so hard for. I think—I hope anyway—that it's a kind of a buttress to intolerance.

Mr. Fatah, what's your take on this?

● (1250)

Mr. Tarek Fatah: Why would anyone be reluctant to apply the law to charitable institutions that are not permitted to be political parties?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: What you're saying, in effect, is that the government is not passing laws to protect us against radicalization. What you said—

Mr. Tarek Fatah: Yes, I'm just going-

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: It hasn't even gotten to the courts yet.

Mr. Tarek Fatah: No, no, no. I'm just talking of criminal activity and the violation of the charitable act. The abysmal cowardice of members of Parliament in urban centres who are looking for vote banks is such that they will look the other way just to get re-elected. Just to get re-elected, they would not ever dare to come back to the caucus and say, "That's a charitable institution and it's spreading hate. Here's the video. Here's the audio."

I dare one urban member of Parliament who is so upset at what our position is to come forward and apply the law as it stands today, because all they care about, and all most politicians in the west today care about, is getting re-elected. We don't have a JFK, a Tommy Douglas, or a Diefenbaker anymore. We just have people being told what to say not to lose votes. That's why the other side is winning and we're concerned about deflated footballs and Super Bowls. On a day when thousands die, this country is watching a sport that is not even played in this country.

The Chair: Thank you.

We're going to finish up now with Mr. Anderson.

Mr. David Anderson: You gentlemen are fairly outspoken.

There are other people, like Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who has written a book and has been targeted because of that. Do you feel threatened at all in this country? Are you threatened?

Mr. Tarek Fatah: I currently have a death threat being investigated by the Toronto police and the OPP—

Mr. David Anderson: I need a quick answer because I have another question.

Mr. Tarek Fatah: Yes, I am, right now, as I speak to you.

Dr. Salim Mansur: We all feel threatened. Yes, of course.

Mr. David Anderson: I'd like to wrap up by asking your opinion on something. Typically, people of faith have written scriptures that they feel have some authority. I've sat down with teachers and imams who assure me that they're moderate and they hate the extremism or whatever, but when the conversation is done, there are basically three or four things that they say are essential to Islam: jihad, either personal or corporate, and sharia law as part of the writings, and typically, dhimmi tax has come into that often. Basically, the statement is that if I abide by my scriptures, these are some of the things that are non-negotiable.

In my reading of it, it seems there's a theology of Islam that is infused with a justice system and a political structure that are in the writings. Someone used the words "schizophrenic cultural reality" today, but I'm wondering how you square that circle. Or am I wrong in what I'm saying? Also, how do you bring those things together between a scripture that is 1,200 years old, but seems to have some of these structures built into it, and the modern world?

Mr. Tarek Fatah: To begin with, jihad has nothing to do with Islam. It's a post-Muhammad law. In fact, I would go to the extent to say that the enemies of the prophet Muhammad, who formed the Umayyad dynasty, are primarily responsible. The same people who slaughtered his family are primarily responsible for crafting sharia law that is today being held by Canadian imams as sacrosanct. It's a lie. They know it. We know it. But the other side of the equation is confused about it.

Islam is a very simple restatement of monotheism, of Judaic background, and probably nothing else other than the annual wealth tax, the prayers you do, and not even the number of prayers, and the fasting you do once a year to relate to the poor. Other than that, sir, nothing is not worthy of being rejected, and people are doing that.

Mr. David Anderson: May I ask our deputy, who's joined us today, to respond to that question as well? And I think Mr. Mansur also wants to.

● (1255)

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Aldin.

Mr. Ayad Aldin (Interpretation): What is the question exactly? Please repeat the question.

Mr. David Anderson: It was a fairly lengthy question.

When I speak to people in our country who say that they are moderate, they insist that there are some fundamentals of Islam that revolve around things such as jihad, the implementation of sharia law, and dhimmi taxes, and if they're going to be faithful to their scriptures, they need to see those as non-negotiable. Mr. Fatah has just said that is not, in fact, his opinion at all, that jihad is not a part of the original Muhammad code. Maybe I should let Mr. Fatah sum that up.

But I'm just wondering about your opinion on those issues.

Mr. Ayad Aldin (Interpretation): There's more than one interpretation for Islam; Islam is open to multiple interpretations. What is well known, whether we're talking about Sunnis or Shiites, according to my understanding as a specialist in Islamic law, is that there is contradiction between Islamic law and the modern state—the Islamic state as explained by jurisprudence experts, not as in the Koran, because there's a difference between what is said in the Koran and what was written by jurisprudence hundreds of years ago that continues to be applicable today. What's in the Islamic law and the jurisprudence that is believed by Sunnis and Shiites is in full contradiction with the state.

The state is a modern legal concept that was done by French jurists before or after the French Revolution. As for the Islamic law, there is no such thing as a legal entity called the state. Whoever wants to apply Islamic law would have to go against all the states in the world, all the countries in the world. I will use one simple point. Those people who collect donations in mosques in Canada and elsewhere are not collecting donations as a social activity, rather, they're doing it based on a fatwa, an Islamic legal opinion.

You, as an MP in the Parliament of Canada, are responsible for enacting laws, but there are parliaments that.... In Islam there's only the mufti who would issue the Islamic fatwa, or verdict, which is stronger than all parliaments. That person who collects funding and donations in Toronto receives the green light from Qom, or Riyadh, or Doha to do that.

The Chair: We're out of time. Thank you very much.

Thank you very much to our witnesses who were here today. I know we could probably go on, but we are limited by our time.

I want to thank Ayad Jamal Aldin. Thank you very much for joining us.

And to our two witnesses here, Mr. Fatah and Mr. Mansur, thank you very much.

With that, the meeting's adjourned.

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