

Ottawa Journal by David Tilson MP ? Liberal government is reducing Canada's commitment to fighting ISIS

The recent Manchester concert attack was a tragedy and reminds us that terrorism is an ongoing international problem and that Canada, together with our allies, must maintain our commitment to fighting it.

Following the attack, media are reporting that the current Liberal government has quietly reduced Canada's contribution to the international coalition to defeat ISIS, which is most concerning. It leaves Canadians with the valid question of whether this action by the current government could represent the end of Canada's military involvement in the anti-ISIS fight, as the current military deployment is scheduled to wrap up at the end of June.

The current Liberal government, May 15, withdrew one of the two CP-140 Aurora surveillance planes that had been flying missions over northern Iraq and Syria since the fall of 2014. The Royal Canadian Air Force's (RCAF) Aurora's are a world-class intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platform. Their capability to provide comprehensive battlefield intelligence has been integral to coalition efforts. Removing 50 per cent of this capability is a slap in the face to our allies and harms Canada's international reputation.

The fact the current Liberal government's decision to withdraw one of the two CP-140 Aurora surveillance planes was made quietly without any announcement, is further proof that this current government has no intention to be open and transparent with Canadians when it comes to Canada's military deployments. In contrast, our previous Conservative government gave regular technical briefings on the activities of our men and women in uniform. It's unacceptable that the Liberal government is making major, operational decisions without informing Canadians. Furthermore, removing one of Canada's CP-140 Auroras from the fight against ISIS is additional proof that Canada is not 'back' on the world stage; we are, in fact, withdrawing from the world stage.

The current Liberal government's track record for being open and transparent with Canadians on defence matters has been weak to date. Defence Minister Sajjan has already once attempted to hide our allies' dissatisfaction with the current government's operational decisions. The fact is he has no credibility left on this or any other issue.

In light of the Manchester bombing, the last thing Canada should do is withdraw from the fight against jihadi terrorists. The Conservative Opposition calls on the current Liberal government to finally take the threat posed by radical Islamic terrorism seriously and ensure Canada does its part to bring the fight to ISIS.

