

National Affairs by Claire Hoy ? We should be prepared to step up

The first major action Justin Trudeau took as prime minister designate was to phone U.S. President Barack Obama to say Canada is getting its fighter jets out of Iraq and Syria.

This followed an election pledge in which he argued that instead of fighting ISIS, we should rely on diplomacy and warm blankets. He didn't mention group hugs at the time.

Last Thursday, as Trudeau prepared to leave for his first major overseas meetings with world leaders, new Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan told CBC News that Canadians have no need to fear ISIS.

'ISIS is a threat, no doubt about that,' he said. 'Should we fear it? No. The Canadian population should have full confidence in all the security services to keep us safe.'

He added that Canada's military remains committed to 'help' bring 25,000 Syrian refugees into Canada by the end of the year. And then came Friday the 13th in Paris.

Now we'll see what Trudeau and Company are made of.

If there ever was a time to scale back military operations against what French President Francois Hollande properly called these 'barbarians,' this, surely, is not that time. Au contraire.

Liberal-minded people like to believe you can solve every problem by just sitting down with people and listening to their grievances. Then, after tea and crumpets and a meaningful chorus of Kumbaya, everybody can go their separate ways and live happily ever after. It has always been complete nonsense, but never more so when dealing with people who will stand up in a crowded concert hall and coldly murder people one by one for the apparently heinous crime of being western infidels.

How do you talk with people who delight in chopping the heads off captives, in turning women and children into sex slaves, in putting captives in cages and burning them alive, and in numerous other outrageous crimes against international norms?

The answer: you don't; you obliterate them.

Another thing. The early evidence from Paris ? where at least 127 innocent people died and more than 300 were wounded ? is that one ISIS shooter had a Syrian passport. Greek officials say he had passed through the island of Leros on Oct. 3, a graphic reminder that in our rush to be the world's good guys and set aside normal security measures to welcome 25,000 Syrian refugees, the current historic migration could be a ticket in for some ISIS extremists wanting to get to the west to wreak havoc.

When Stephen Harper made that point during the hysteria caused by the heart-wrenching picture of a young boy lying dead on a beach ? which the media and the opposition shamefully turned into a failing by Harper, as though Canada had something to do with it ? he was roundly attacked for lacking empathy for the hordes of misplaced people.

No doubt the vast majority of the current refugees are, through no fault of their own, caught up in the growing regional war, but, as the Paris experience shows, we still must do due diligence before we open our gates to one and all.

As for Hajjit's claim that Canadians have nothing to fear from ISIS, well, let us just say that ISIS has publicly put us on their hit list as a charter member of the western alliance. We've already experienced some terrorist attacks in this country, so surely this is no time for our newly elected leaders to stick their collective heads into an Ottawa snowbank and pretend we're immune from such savagery.

Responding to what was the worst attack in France since World War 2, and one of the worst terrorist atrocities on Western soil since the 9/11 attack in New York and elsewhere, French President Hollande called it an 'act of war' and promised to take the fight to ISIS.

With the G20 countries gathering for meetings ? the showpiece of which is a climate summit, the overhyped 'threat' of which surely pales by comparison to the real threat of ISIS ? now would be the time for all western countries to man up and pledge the necessary resources ? both military and humanitarian ? to wipe this current evil from the face of the earth.

Just as Canada stood proudly against Hitler and his friends, so too should we be prepared to step up and help end the scourge of ISIS.

Last June, when veteran CBC journalist Terry Milewski asked Trudeau ? when ISIS atrocities were again making headlines ? 'If you don't want to bomb a group as ghastly as ISIS, when would you ever support real military action?'

Arrogantly dismissing a good question as 'nonsensical,' Trudeau claimed Liberals have always 'been supportive of Canada standing up for its values and taking action where necessary.'

Really? Under Trudeau's leadership in opposition, Liberals voted ? not once, but twice ? against the current modest combat mission against ISIS.

Now we'll really see if Trudeau thinks the Paris massacre merits 'taking action where necessary.'

Let us hope so

