

## **Member of Parliament Dennis Bevington speaking on Bill C-44 Protection of Canada from Terrorists Act on January 30, 2015.**

Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for *Rivière-des-Mille-Îles*. I am speaking today to Bill C-44, a terrorism bill. However, before I get into the more technical aspects of my speech, I want to talk a bit about the threat of terrorism in Canada.

I have heard my colleagues across the way describe the events of last fall as being one of the most egregious terrorism acts that we have seen in Canada, but I do not think it actually deserves that title. The most egregious act of terrorism that occurred in Canada was Air India in 1985. It was a very tragic occurrence. CSIS at the time was tracking the terrorists, and we did not have very good oversight over CSIS and its operations then. For many years, Parliament was unable to get to the bottom of it, and required quite extensive action on the part of government to do that. What we saw in 1985 was a large act of terrorism, in which hundreds of people were killed. That is, in my mind, the primary event of terrorism in Canada in the time I have been here.

We have seen other acts of terrorism. We have seen it in the Alberta gas fields, where people have blown up gas wells on numerous occasions. We have seen acts of terrorism on the west coast against hydroelectric facilities. Terrorism has shown up in Canada quite often over the course of our lifetimes.

Only today do we see this kind of knee-jerk reaction to incidents for which we have much difficulty understanding as pure terrorism, because the individuals involved had mental and social issues. They may well have been influenced by ideology from one ethnic group or the other, but they were not driven or coerced by that. They acted on their own and in some ways acted haphazardly and in a way that suggested they were simply emotional outbursts. To me, that is not the same type of thing as a carefully planned and executed destruction of an airliner, killing hundreds of people. That is truly a definition of, if not terrorism, the relative degree of importance of the acts that take place.

It is unfortunate that in the events we have seen in the last few months, we now will make decisions about the way we run Canada that we did not choose to make in 1985 or at other times when we were faced with acts that we could justifiably call terrorism. Therefore, why are we doing it now? Why are we taking these actions now? What is the larger threat that we see and perceive that will curtail more human rights and the basic freedoms we have in Canada, those that we have worked very hard to maintain? What are we doing?

With the latest bill, we would increase the powers of Canada's spy agency. We are offering it up as another international body to engage in espionage and spy on other countries. We have created this situation in the law. Clause 8 of the bill calls for enabling "the Service to investigate, within or outside Canada, a threat to the security of Canada or to perform its duties and functions under section 16". The important words

are “outside Canada“. Now we will give our intelligence service more latitude to pursue its objectives outside of Canada.

Section 21 of the act asks that we also give the agency the ability to act without regard to any other law, in other words, any other law of another country. We are asking our intelligence service to open up the opportunity to spy on other countries, to disregard the laws that other countries might have toward their citizens and pursue our intelligence system in that regard. We are taking a step to a more confrontational approach to other nations based on one single perceived threat of ISIL, or al Qaeda, or those foreign agencies that we see as being the prime international threat to the stability of the world right now.

We are on a fairly slippery slope and this is simply the first piece of legislation that the government is coming forward with, and we are going to see some more. We were given public notice of another bill today, and I have not had the opportunity to review it. However, certainly we are moving in that direction. It is something that we have to take very seriously. It is not simple. It is not simply to jump on the bandwagon and let us go after increased surveillance abilities our intelligence service overseas. Within Canada we will see our intelligence service taking other kinds of actions which would not have been permitted in the past.

Is the threat of that significance why we need to move in that direction? I would argue that after the larger incident of terrorism that occurred in 1985, we made some changes to our airport security system. We did some things to help reduce that threat. We did not really provide that same coordination within the country that perhaps was required. I think we are all in favour of greater coordination between our protective services. However, at that time, we did not see the need to give our intelligence service these types of powers to take out of the country. Yet we have seen incidents far less serious than that which are now driving us in that direction. Why? Is it simply by politics?

That is a concern that we all have on this side of the House, that we are moving ahead with restrictions of the rights and privileges of Canadians based on the political necessity of creating this threat in the Canadian political process. It is unfortunate that we would then choose to change our laws, laws that have been in place for a long time.

In some ways, politics is important in terms of our international relationships. When we see a Canadian foreign minister abroad being pelted with eggs and shoes, that is an unusual occurrence for Canada. Perhaps we should look at the politics of what we are doing rather than simply looking at ways that we can intervene militarily. We have moved away from a Canadian position of enlightened centralism into one that picks sides. That is the greatest threat to Canadian security in this day and age.