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MODERATOR: Thank you, Minister. So the Prime Minister will take some questions from the media. When I call your name if you could please make your way to the microphone which is down to the right on the Prime Minister's left. We'll start with Ted Chernecki, from Global B.C., please.

TED CHERNECKI (Global B.C.): Yes, Mr. Prime Minister, can I ask for your reaction to the appointment of Kevin Vickers as ambassador to Ireland given what happened in October to you personally and to your caucus? I'm just kind of wondering how are you going to replace that kind of experience and expertise on Parliament Hill?

RIGHT HONOURABLE STEPHEN HARPER (Prime Minister of Canada): Well, first of all I obviously want to congratulate Mr. Vickers. I've known Kevin for a very long time. He became sergeant-at-arms under our government. He has vast security experience as a longstanding member of the RCMP and obviously on the parliamentary precinct as well and significant management experience through his roles on Parliament Hill.

I don't have to tell anybody or repeat his tremendous acts of heroism back on October the 22nd. I think they speak for themselves and speak to his character and I know he will do a tremendous job as ambassador to Ireland and I know he's looking forward to that assignment.

MODERATOR: Brynn Weiss, from Sun. You can make your way down to the microphone. You can go to the microphone down there.

BRYNN WEISS (Sun Media): Yes, Mr. Prime Minister. First off, for my colleagues at TVA in Quebec, I wonder if you could make the same comments about Vickers in French. And then also, as a separate note, the oil prices

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continue to worry a number of people, I'm sure yourself included. With the price of oil as it is right now, what do you think the effects will be on Canada, particularly the oil rich provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan?

RIGHT HONOURABLE STEPHEN HARPER: Well look, you know, it's pretty obvious that this will have a significant impact in the oil producing parts of the country. This is obviously a big drop in price. It's already had impact in terms of some capital investment plans going forward. That's to say we all know that I would just say two things to kind of counterbalance that. One is the reality that oil price changes have different effects in different parts of the country and different industries. They obviously have some good effects on consumers. So it's a complex series of effects it has on the Canadian economy as a whole.

Look, I will say this: I've spent a lot of time. I know the industry very well in Alberta and I can tell you this. As rapid and negative a change that this is for the industry, the industry even in my lifetime has lived through changes this extreme and more on many occasions. This is not without precedent. It's a resilient industry and it will see its way clear to a prosperous future.

ANIMATEUR: Puis en français sur M. Vickers.

TRÈS HONORABLE STEPHEN HARPER: En français sur M. Vickers. Oui, évidemment je voudrais féliciter M. Vickers pour sa nomination comme notre nouvel ambassadeur en Irlande. Je connais Kevin depuis longtemps. Il est un fonctionnaire, c'est quelqu'un de dévoué au service public depuis toute sa carrière comme agent de la GRC, aussi comme agent de sécurité sur la Colline parlementaire. Il a aussi pendant cette période gagné une expérience exceptionnelle comme gestionnaire. Et évidemment ce n'est pas nécessaire pour moi de faire un

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autre commentaire sur son héroïsme le 22 octobre. C'est quelque chose reconnu à travers le monde. Et évidemment il mérite très bien ce nouveau poste et je sais très bien qu'il attend ça avec impatience. Et encore je le félicite.

MODERATOR: We're going to continue with Darryl Hall, from the Globe and Mail.

DARRYL HALL (Globe and Mail): Thank you. Mr. Harper, after the attacks in Saint-Jean sur Richelieu and in Ottawa last October, you said your government was weighing additional powers for police and other agencies to thwart attacks like these. Of course since then we've seen the events in Sydney and yesterday in Paris. I'm wondering what powers do you believe are now necessary in Canada and how long before we might see some of those measures?

RIGHT HONOURABLE STEPHEN HARPER: As you know, the government brought forward a first series of changes in the fall and it was C-44 I think was the bill number. Those are making their way through the legislative process, but we have said we are looking at additional powers to make sure that our security agencies have the range of tools available to them to identify potential terror threats and to take arrests and other actions, detention and arrests and other actions where necessary. So we're looking at those things very carefully. We want to make sure that we get a balance that we protect the rights of Canadians and also the security of Canadians. We must protect both. And I anticipate that we will be moving forward very early in the new session with additional legislative proposals.

MODERATOR: We will continue with Julie Gordon, from Reuters.

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JULIE GORDON (Reuters): Hi. Prime Minister Harper, if I could just follow up on that, has Canada raised the terrorism threat level in light of yesterday's attack in Paris? And what conclusions should we draw from the appointment of a security hawk, Richard McFadden, as your national security advisor? Thank you.

RIGHT HONOURABLE STEPHEN HARPER: First of all on the... on the issue of the security threat, that... the level of the security threat is decided by the director of CSIS in consultation with the Integrated National Security Team of the government. So that's a decision not made by politicians. Obviously they will assess a range of issues. As some of you know, they did raise the threat level back in the fall, actually prior to the events on Parliament Hill.

Obviously, one would expect – just a brief comment – one would expect that the national security advisor to the Prime Minister would be someone with a background in security and security agencies. And I know that Mr. Richard Fadden will do a good... a good job in that particular role.

But let me just say this with reference obviously to the attack yesterday and to all the questions you're asking me today, the reality of the world is the following, and I don't say this out of any particular pleasure or excitement. In fact, quite the contrary. But it is a fact. The fact of the matter is this, ladies and gentlemen, that the international jihadist movement has declared war. They have declared war on anybody who does not think and act exactly as they wish they would think and act. They have declared war and already are executing and on a massive scale on a whole range of countries with which they are in contact. And they have declared war on any country like ourselves that values freedom, openness and tolerance.

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And we may not like this and wish it would go away, but it is not going to go away. And the reality is we are going to have to confront it. That's what obviously we're doing in concert with our allies, dealing with the very worst manifestation of this, which is an entire jihadist army that is now occupying large elements of large parts of Iraq and Syria. And obviously other things we are doing, both here and in concert with our allies, to try and prevent and deal with terrorist planning on our own soil.

And this is going to be unfortunately the reality of the world that I think we're living in for sometime to come and we're just going to have to face that head on and deal with it. And that's what our government's committed to do.

Je vais répéter ces commentaires en français. La réalité, les événements en France, en Australie, ici et ailleurs, dans l'Afrique, au Moyen-Orient, ils indiquent la réalité à laquelle nous devons faire face. Et c'est la réalité. Il y a un mouvement djihadiste international qui a déclaré la guerre contre n'importe quelle personne qui est différente d'eux.

Et c'est la réalité et pour nous, pour des sociétés libres, ouvertes et tolérantes, ils ont une haine particulièrement virulente contre une telle société comme le Canada, comme la France, comme l'Australie. La réalité pendant les années à venir est que nous devons faire face à ça. C'est la raison pour laquelle nous sommes avec nos alliés en Irak pour contrer l'armée, c'est toute une armée djihadiste-là qui occupe une grande partie de ce pays qui est en train de détruire la vie normale dans plusieurs pays ailleurs et qui est en train de planifier des attaques comme hier en France.

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Nous devons participer à cette mission et nous devons renforcer nos lois ici et nos consultations avec nos alliés pour contrer ces menaces sur notre propre territoire.

MODERATOR: Manjula Dufresne, CBC.

MANJULA DUFRESNE (CBC): Prime Minister, what yardstick are you using to measure success against ISIS in Iraq and what are your thoughts about whether the mission there should be expanded and in what way? And could you do that in both English and French, please?

RIGHT HONOURABLE STEPHEN HARPER: In terms of measuring success, I think I indicated in the House of Commons when I spoke to the launching of this mission that we have a couple of objectives. The first obvious objective was to halt the spread of this movement, the Islamist, so-called Islamic state over a growing territory of the Middle East and I actually think we could say that we've had considerable success in that regard. While it has not been rolled back significantly, the advance over territory due to allied action has been more or less stopped at this moment and in fact, I think there's even some small reversal of the gains that ISIL has made.

A second objective is obviously to thereby, linked to the first objective, thereby reduce the threat that this movement poses to the wider world and in particular to this country. And I think there is more work to be done to accomplish those things but obviously that's why we continue to be committed to this particular mission.

The third is obviously, a third objective which is really something beyond our capacity really has to be done by the Iraqis and Syrians themselves, is to deal with the conditions in those countries that have allowed the

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spread of this particular group and its occupation of significant territory. We can assist in that but as President Obama and others have observed, the Iraqis and the Syrians themselves have to be a significant part of the solution to that particular problem.

And look, we will... we will... we haven't taken any decisions on next steps. We will continue to evaluate this mission according to this criteria and according to the risks that we think ultimately it poses to our country. That's ultimately why we are there. This is a movement that has declared war on Canada specifically and has shown that it has the ability to develop the capacities to execute attacks on this soil.

And that's why we will continue to do what is necessary to eliminate that particular threat.

Pour le répéter, je me suis adressé à ces objectifs pendant mon discours à la Chambre des communes au commencement de cette mission. D'abord, c'est notre intention d'arrêter l'avance de l'État islamique et je pense que jusqu'à maintenant les alliés ont beaucoup fait à cet objectif.

Deuxièmement, de réduire la menace que ce mouvement représente pour notre propre pays. Et évidemment nous sommes en train de poursuivre cet objectif.

Troisièmement, ce n'est pas notre objectif mais évidemment on veut éliminer cette menace en Iraq et en Syrie. Mais pour réduire... pour réduire la menace de ce mouvement dans cette région c'est nécessaire pour les Irakiens et les Syriens de faire plus pour arriver à un tel résultat. Nous travaillons avec eux mais c'est nécessaire pour ce pays de s'adresser plus efficacement à cet objectif.

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Mais nous continuerons à participer dans les efforts de nos alliés contre cette menace. C'est une menace réelle au territoire canadien et nous continuerons à aider nos alliés jusqu'au point que cette menace ne continue pas à représenter un défi à notre pays.

MODERATOR: Melanie Nagy, from CTV.

MELANIE NAGY (CTV): Prime Minister, when you use words like “international jihadists declaring war” what do you say then to Canadians today to assure them of their safety? And in addition to military campaigns what else can be done to stop these people?

RIGHT HONOURABLE STEPHEN HARPER: Well, look, a whole range of things can be done and are being done. Look, I say the following to Canadians. I say as I said earlier the threats are real. If anyone doubted that, I think those doubts vanished on October the 22nd. Although I would point out to people that that was not the first incident or first visible manifestation of this threat in Canada.

You know, we had the Toronto 18 arrests several years ago. We had arrests around a plot to blow up Via Rail services. So these are... B.C. Legislature. These are very real things. The reality is that our security agencies are able in the vast majority of cases to identify threats that are out there and to prevent them from coming to fruition.

But the fact of the matter is this recent development, the emergence of the Islamic, so-called Islamic State, its control of a vast, sudden control of a vast territory with vast amounts of financial resources has escalated this to a whole new global level. And we will as I say continue to work with our allies

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and our security agencies to do whatever we can do and must do to preserve the rights and security of Canadians.

Now I would say this. The fact of the matter is the movement is real. We must all act vigilant. We encourage citizens and communities obviously to cooperate with our security agencies in terms of any requests for information or assistance.

But at the same time we also encourage people to go about their lives, to go about their lives and to exercise our rights and freedoms and our openness as a society as loudly and as clearly as we can because that is the best way of defeating what is ultimately a movement of hatred and intolerance.

(applause)

ANIMATEUR: Et on va terminer avec Cendrix Bouchard, de Radio-Canada.

CENDRIX BOUCHARD (Radio-Canada) : Monsieur Harper, est-ce qu'on peut vous entendre un peu plus au sujet de l'attaque de Paris hier, notamment au sujet dans la dimension de l'attaque contre la liberté de presse et la liberté d'expression partout dans le monde?

TRÈS HONORABLE STEPHEN HARPER: Je peux dire seulement évidemment que tout le monde ici, à travers le monde est choqué par une attaque lâche, une attaque si violente. C'est quelque chose terrible et évidemment le fait que cette attaque est évidemment planifiée avec une exécution militaire indique la vraie nature et la vraie capacité de cette menace pour tout le monde, pas seulement pour nos amis de la France mais pour tout le monde libre, ouvert et tolérant.

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Évidemment nous exprimons notre solidarité avec la France. Nos ministres seront en contact avec leurs homologues français pour indiquer notre capacité d'aider. Aussi pour continuer le dialogue pour identifier les façons par lesquelles on peut éviter une telle situation à l'avenir. Mais évidemment nous sommes tous dans le même bateau.

Je répète ce que j'ai dit en anglais. Évidemment comme pays, comme citoyen, nous devons être vigilants mais en même temps c'est essentiel d'exprimer et d'exercer nos droits et nos libertés et notre tolérance pour démontrer notre opposition à ce mouvement intolérant, à ce mouvement de la haine.

ANIMATEUR: Merci beaucoup, tout le monde. Thank you.

TRÈS HONORABLE STEPHEN HARPER: Merci.

(Applause)

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