



My Lords I add to the welcomes to the Noble Lord, Lord Hague of Richmond, and note his perfect timing in bringing his immeasurable wisdom and experience to our debates, and look forward very much to his contribution.

The Just War criteria have to my mind been met. But while they are necessary, they are not by themselves sufficient in action of this kind – where we can end up doing the right thing in such a wrong way that it becomes the wrong thing.

To my mind there are three components which currently need more emphasis and to some extent are missing.

In this role, through visiting all 38 provinces of the Anglican Communion, through the constant contacts we have with Muslim and Christian leaders in the region – as recently as three weeks ago in a conference at Lambeth Palace – I am constantly reminded that this is a global issue, to which we are addressing local solutions.

ISIL is but one head of the Hydra: religiously-motivated extremism is not restricted to one part of the world.

Secondly, our bombing action plays into the expectation of ISIL and other jihadist groups in the region, springing from their apocalyptic theology. The totality of our actions must subvert that false narrative, because by itself it will not work.

If we act only against ISIL, globally, and only in the way proposed so far, we will strengthen their resolve, increase their recruitment and encourage their sympathisers. Without a far more comprehensive approach we confirm their dreadful belief that what they are doing is the will of God.

Thirdly, it is essential to defeat ISIL and other extremist narratives.

The Prime Minister's strategy and the speech of the Noble Lady rightly recognised that military action is only one part of the answer. But there must be a global theological and ideological component – not just one in this country – to what we are doing, and it must be one that is relentlessly pursued and promoted.

And it must include challenging Saudi Arabia and Qatar, whose own promotion of a particular brand of Islamic theology has provided a source from which ISIL have drawn a false legitimisation.

It must also show clear support for global mainstream Muslim and other religious leaders.

Finally, there is room and requirement for greater generosity in our nation's hospitality to refugees. But hospitality must be accompanied by a clear strategy that reduces the need for others to seek sanctuary – and that was in the Noble Lady's remarks and was welcome – and enables those who have fled to return. The communities that have lived there for 2,000 years should not simply be emptied from that region.

The additional military force we are bringing to this quasi-policing operation already active over Syria, symbolically and to some extent significantly adds to what is happening there.

But far more than that, it enables us to act where our resources and expertise are world-leading: in the creation of post-conflict peace and

nation-building.

Only a holistic, theological and global policy will achieve our aims.

3 min read

Source URL: <https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/archbishop-canterburys-speech-syria>