



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Main Committee**

**INDONESIA: TERRORIST ATTACKS**

**SPEECH**

**Tuesday, 22 October 2002**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

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**Page** 8368  
**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Bishop, Julie, MP

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**Question No.**

**Ms JULIE BISHOP** (Curtin) (8.37 pm)—I had the opportunity and the privilege to attend a number of services on the weekend in memory of those persons killed on 12 October in Bali. On Sunday, there was a particularly moving service at Government House on St Georges Terrace. That service was of special significance because of the very close association between Western Australia and Bali. Our state's relative isolation draws us close to our northern neighbour and nourishes the relationship between our community and Bali that is so familiar to us. It is that closeness that has tragically led to the deaths of so many Western Australians—victims of terrorism.

The enormity of the tragedy is still unfolding. Our thoughts are with the victims, their families and those still recovering from this immoral, despicable act. But our thoughts are also turning to those behind this atrocity. I am reminded that on 1 October last year the then mayor of New York City, Rudy Giuliani, stood before the General Assembly of the United Nations. Three weeks prior to Giuliani's address, almost 3,000 office workers in downtown Manhattan had been incinerated in the World Trade Centre by the al-Qaeda terrorists. Addressing the assembly, Giuliani eschewed the temptation to ignore the atrocity, to accommodate terror. He said to the assembled delegates:

... I ask you to look in your hearts and recognize that there is no room for neutrality on the issue of terrorism. You're either with civilization or with terrorists. On one side is democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human life; on the other is tyranny, arbitrary executions, and mass murder. We're right and they're wrong. It's as simple as that.

Giuliani went on:

Let those who say that we must understand the reasons for terrorism come with me to the thousands of funerals we are having in New York City and explain those insane, maniacal reasons to the children who will grow up without fathers and mothers, to the parents who have had their children ripped from them for no reason at all ... There is no excuse for mass murder, just as there is no excuse for genocide. Those who practice terrorism—murdering or victimizing innocent civilians—lose any right to have their cause understood by decent people and lawful nations.

As Australians, we were profoundly affected by the events of 11 September 2001, not least because of the loss of Australian life on that terrible day. Yet, observing from the other side of the world, we could not help but experience the carnage in the abstract. But now the effect is personal; it transcends the abstract.

We have as a nation entered a family of peoples touched and scarred by terrorism. This cowardly, repulsive action is but the most recent in a global litany of outrages against decent peoples. In the past two years alone, we have seen numerous terrorist attacks, including a bombing probably by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front outside the US Embassy in Manila, injuring nine people; the assault on an Indian airport by the Lashkar-e-Tayiba group; a car bomb outside the BBC's London studios; the murder of two policemen by ETA in Hernani, Spain; the detonation of a bomb at an Israeli bus stop, killing one person and wounding 60; the bombing by Hamas of a nightclub in Tel Aviv, causing over 140 casualties; and the bombing of a Jerusalem pizza restaurant, also by Hamas, killing 15 and wounding more than 90.

In Pakistan alone, anti-Christian terrorist attacks have occurred on St Dominic's Church in Bahawalpur, killing 16; at the Protestant International Church in Islamabad, killing five; on the executive secretary of the Karachi diocese of the Church of Pakistan; at the Murree Christian School, killing six; at the Christian Hospital in Taxila, killing four; and at the Institute for Peace and Justice charity in Karachi, killing seven.

Perhaps it is because these attacks seem so senseless, or perhaps it is because the deliberate targeting of civilians seems so alien, but whatever the reason it is clear that many of us are unable to grasp the nature of this war. Already we are hearing the rumblings on the fringes that somehow we deserved this, that this is 'blowback' for Australia's role in East Timorese independence, the war against al-Qaeda in Afghanistan or Australia's position on the Iraqi regime. The Anglican Primate, Dr Peter Carnley, aired such comments during his address to the Anglican Synod last week. Dr Carnley suggested:

Given the bombing of Afghanistan and the dispersal in disarray of al-Qaeda and Taliban forces, and Australia's high profile support of President George Bush's stance in relation to a possible war on Iraq, it was surely only a matter of time before Australian lives were sacrificed in some form of retaliatory action.

Apparently it seems perfectly normal that the murder of Australian tourists is somehow retaliation. With others, I have been profoundly disappointed and concerned by these and similar comments. For one thing they reveal irrational Australocentric navel-gazing. Terrorists have consistently targeted Western civilians for their own motivations, not for reasons that meet a self-flagellating template. Perhaps we cannot do much about how others view this, except not let their confusion become ours. As US Ambassador Schieffer noted over the weekend, one cannot opt on or opt off the terrorist list. Or in the words of Mark Steyn, writing in *The Spectator*, 'They kill us because they hate us.'

Let us apply some logic to the Carnley assertion. The probability is that the perpetrators belong to a radical Islamic fundamentalist group—let us assume that. First, the rationale for these attacks is actually a perverted Islamo-fascism. This Islamic radicalism does not discriminate between one 'infidel' and another. As the Prime Minister has already noted, the bomb blasts in Kuta did not just affect Australians, British, Americans and Indonesians; the devastation did not spare Swedes, French, Ecuadorians, Brazilians, Germans, Greeks, Canadians, New Zealanders or Koreans. Second, the planned attack on the Australian High Commission in Singapore in January this year, an attack that was foiled by joint intelligence cooperation across the region, predated the current debate on Iraq. Third, the connection is fallacious, as has been noted by American academic James Lindgren. Professor Lindgren pointed out:

There are those who say that Australia somehow provoked the Bali mass murder by supporting the US in the expected war with Iraq. Some of the same people also say that there is no evidence of al-Qaeda links with Iraq. If there is no al-Qaeda link to Iraq, then why were Australians attacked by al-Qaeda for supporting the US in the expected war with Iraq?

Finally, the connection is worthless. Even if this were in some way, any way, blowback, then what? Australia's position on East Timor was just and right. Our position on al-Qaeda was just and right. Our position on Iraq is just and right. Should a free nation craft its policies not by reference to ideals or principles but rather by trying to minimise the offence taken by murderers or the attention of fanatics? Has it come to this: that we should not meet the gaze of terrorists, that we should hope the storm passes us by or encourage the terrorists to target others so that we are not targets ourselves? No, that would be unthinkable.

Others say, 'This is all because of the US support of Israel.' I am afraid the objective of these terrorists is not a self-governing Palestine but the death of the West. Now it may well be the case that for certain terrorists, affronted by Washington's support for Israel, blowing up tourists in Bali makes sense. But that ignores the reality of the terrorists' unprovoked hatred of the West, our culture, our values, our way of life. By their act of terror and their display of barbarity, these killers have brought upon their own heads what will be the terrible and swift sword of justice.

It is incumbent upon us as a nation and as a parliament to do all that we can to comfort and protect the victims and their families and to protect the innocent people of Bali and Indonesia and to do all within our power to hunt down and punish those who perpetrated this atrocity. I join with all my colleagues in the parliament, with my constituents in my electorate and with the good people of Australia in supporting this motion.