



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



THE SENATE

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

National Security

SPEECH

Monday, 22 September 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

SPEECH

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Questioner
Speaker Abetz, Sen Eric

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Senator ABETZ (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (15:31): I move:

That the Senate take note of the document.

Earlier today, the Prime Minister made a statement to the other place on national security. The considered statement highlights the duty of government and the grave circumstances the world community faces today because of the emergence of ISIL, an organisation that can simply be described as a terrorist organisation and one which is engaged in acts of barbarism and brutality unparalleled in recent times. Regrettably, Australia is not immune. I congratulate the Prime Minister on his leadership in these difficult times. Australians overwhelmingly appreciate his decisive leadership, as they appreciate the Leader of the Opposition's bipartisan support.

In response to the circumstances we confront, the Prime Minister told the other place:

Regrettably, for some time to come, the delicate balance between freedom and security may have to shift. There may be more restrictions on some so that there can be more protection for others. After all, the most basic freedom of all is the freedom to walk the streets unharmed and to sleep safe in our beds at night.

Creating new offences that are harder to beat on a technicality may be a small price to pay for saving lives and maintaining the social fabric of an open, free and multicultural nation.

That applies to this place as well—namely, the parliament—and I want to briefly acknowledge the work of you, Mr President, and that of Madam Speaker in reassessing the security needs of those who work in this place and those who visit it.

The fact that 40 nations are joining to fight ISIL tells us something. They are joined in fighting a movement that justifies the beheadings, crucifixions, mass executions, ethnic cleansing, rapes and sexual slavery that have taken place in every town and city they have captured. To do such evil, and to revel in doing such evil, is simply unprecedented. This revolting barbarity has regrettably found support in our midst and as a result we need to respond. Time is limited; other senators reasonably wish to comment. I simply commend the statement to the Senate and to the Australian people.