

10.11.05

Dear Senators,

The proposed anti-terror laws are the most important issue to face us since WW 2. Our Constitutional system of government and our respect for the rights of others is what sets us apart from the terrorists and fanatics of the world.

I feel that resilient and courageous politicians - from all sides of politics - working together can help stop these dangerous laws. Many citizens would love to see the Senate block these laws. I'm afraid the Government needs to realise that there are limits to how far citizens can be pushed regarding our fundamental freedoms. If you agree with the sentiments expressed in the submission below please help stop this assault on the concepts and values that underpin our society.

Re: Anti-Terror Laws

I am a concerned citizen who has studied the issues that are raised by the West's response to the threat of terrorism for over 20 years. As you know the issues are complex and I can only give you a brief description here. Much of this you would already be aware of but this information may help you and others who are concerned about protecting our civil liberties.

We in Australia have been very fortunate to have as the basis of our legal system the British Common Law. The protections that we inherited have come from hard fought battles and a thousand years of progress to enable people to live in civilised freedom. The British Magna Carta and Bill of Rights are to a large degree the foundations of our current Liberty and Prosperity. We are by no means a perfect society but Australia is by far one of the most fortunate nations in the world. Plenty of fine tuning can be done to improve things but any politician that supports "anti-terror laws" is definitely taking us in the wrong direction.

The key points to consider when discussing the proposed laws are as follows:

- 1.. A terrorist act involves conspiring to commit murder and actually committing murder. These activities are already illegal.
- 2.. Police already have powers to lawfully investigate these crimes. If you ask the police or ASIO if they need more power they will say "of course we do - and make it quick.....!!!"
- 3.. Our system of justice insists that citizens are innocent until proven guilty. This is to help avoid the tragedy of an innocent person being punished

for a crime that they did not commit. This system demands that police investigate crimes thoroughly and collect enough evidence lawfully to make a good case that warrants charges being laid.

4.. If the police can't get enough evidence to warrant action against a suspect then they have not got a case.

5.. Some people will argue that the wrongful imprisonment or death of an innocent citizen is the price we pay to stop innocent people being killed in a terrorist attack. I would respond that the type of society that condones the regular harassing, jailing, and killing of innocent citizens is a society not worth honouring, protecting or living in.

6.. Compared to many nations Australia has an enviable reputation of transparent, honest government and police services. Just imagine a future Australia where there may be some bad apples in police and government. These types of people enjoy power as a tool to aid corruption and other criminal behaviour. Without high moral and ethical standards from all concerned anti-terror laws can be seriously abused. For example scores can be settled and money made in organized crime with the misuse of the proposed laws.

7.. What if we had these laws in the 70's? Would Australians sending money to the ANC and Nelson Mandela have been imprisoned for life? Perhaps they would have still been rotting in an Australian jail while Mandela led South Africa as President...!!! One man's terrorist is another man's Freedom Fighter. Let there be a free flow of debate and discussion. Much more often than not - good will triumph over stupidity.

8.. Our diggers were sent to die to uphold our freedoms. What happens after these draconian laws are passed and our heritage of Liberty destroyed? When we march in the street protesting will we be monitored, detained without trial and jailed? Can you believe that one day in the future Australians will have to fight back to regain our freedom? But innocent civilians won't be the target it will be the politicians that have trashed a thousand years of progress because of stupidity and ignorance - or maybe due to their treachery and lust for power...!!!

9.. Most people are decent and just want to be able to live, work and raise their families in a peaceful, safe environment where food, clothing, shelter and other necessities are available with a reasonable amount of effort. Much of the world's problems are due to a lack of honest, mature and intelligent leadership.

10.. Be aware that the last century has proven that the worst acts of terror and mass murder are perpetuated by States against their own people. Laws similar to the proposed anti-terror laws helped make it possible. The worst atrocities against innocent people have always been State orchestrated or sponsored. This is one of the crucial reasons to limit State or police powers and have protections such as Habeas Corpus, Separation of State and Judiciary and the Right to prompt, public trial by an impartial Jury of your peers.

11.. The terrorists win if they change our values and our way of life. In fact anti-terrorist laws as they are being proposed take us gradually toward Totalitarianism. Bin Laden and his ilk are laughing as they see the panicked West destroy the very foundations of our civilisation and the basis for our prosperity.

12.. The West must rethink this knee-jerk response and flawed approach. Instead we should actually reinforce our fundamental rights and freedoms. Shout them from the rooftops. Teach them in our schools. Salute them everyday before work. We win when we thumb our noses at the murderers and keep living in civilised freedom. It is our responsibility to show the third-world that the best way forward is to respect the human rights of all people - not just the people from your own sect or religion. Once there is a true worldwide acceptance of the fundamental Right to Life then no government will be able to waste its citizen's money on weapons and war. The resources freed up will go a long way to help more of the world's people live in freedom and prosperity - the best cure for terrorism.

The threat of terror attacks in Australia has created a dilemma for politicians. The public demand security so politicians have to do something. By introducing

these laws they give only the appearance of responding effectively to the problem. It will take a lot of courage for opponents of these laws to convince people that these laws won't help one bit to stop an attack. The harshest laws in the world could not have stopped the London bombing. But the harsh "shoot-to-kill" laws guarantee the death of many innocent people just like Jean Charles de Menezes, the young Brazilian man shot by police in London.

Australia's State and Territory politicians think that if they oppose the laws and a successful attack occurs then their opponents will blame them (no doubt about it). An angry, manipulated and misled population will also blame them. Our State leaders their Federal colleagues are acting out of political self interest and fear if they support anti-terror laws of any type. The easy way out for them is to just support the laws. The hard way is to explain properly to the public why the new laws should be opposed and rejected outright.

In any nation in the world two or three sociopaths can get together and execute an atrocity. The only possible protection we have is simply well organized and co-ordinated police and intelligence work. The anti-terror laws are not needed and are indeed dangerous.

More ominously we need to also be aware that there are people who actually want to introduce laws such as these to increase Government and Police power. These people are using the current climate of fear to trick people into giving up essential Liberty for a false sense of security. This agenda must be exposed and resisted.

I am sorry to write this to you anonymously but I am a peaceful person working toward a better world and I do not want the enemies of freedom and rational thought targeting me. Any person advocating a world without weapons where people co-operate in peace has a lot of potential enemies from the sectors that profit from conflict and war. Isn't it a concern if good people feel intimidated to speak up publicly about important but controversial issues? That's not the sort of country I want to see Australia become.

Thank you for your time.

Yours truly,

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