



Speech by

**Mrs D. PRATT**

**MEMBER FOR NANANGO**

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### **TERRORISM [COMMONWEALTH POWERS] BILL**

**Mrs PRATT** (Nanango—Ind) (9.36 p.m.): I rise to speak to this Terrorism (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2002 and in so doing my sympathies go to all those who suffer and will probably still suffer because of the Twin Towers terrorism act and the Bali terrorism act. There is a quote that I read somewhere once which said, 'Terrorism is the most degraded form of language.' There are few people on this planet today who cannot relate to these words and there is no country now which has not felt the touch of its brutality. The veil of secrecy drawn around the terrorists of the third millennium is not new to western societies, nor are many of the methods they use to kill, maim and destroy its mainly innocent victims. It was at the end of the 1960s that terrorists, fighting as so-called freedom fighters, shifted away from isolated bandit-type groups into urban based terrorist cells across the world and formed links with each other to have access to the high-tech world of terrorism as we know it today.

Today, these groups are financed by immensely rich businessmen, are massively armed and highly trained. Terrorists are assured of their powerful patronage that allows them to move with confidence across national borders which in the Western world until recently were very slack. These terrorists are not the terrorists or freedom fighters as they called themselves in the late sixties when Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, a close companion of Cuban President Fidel Castro, roamed the mountains of Bolivia. Guevara wrote a message to the Tricontinental Conference in Havana in 1966 just before he died in the Bolivian Andes after a failed revolt, explaining the justification behind acts of terrorism: 'We must above all keep our hatred alive and fan it to paroxysm, hate as a factor of struggle, intransigent hate of the enemy, hate that can push a human being beyond his natural limits and make him a cold, violent, selective and effective killing machine.'

The quote is also cited in Italy's Red Brigades ControlInformazione in July 1978. The conference was attended by 513 delegates representing 83 groups from the Third World. The conference voted to give support to democratic workers and student groups in capitalist countries and national liberation movements. It announced as its general declaration the purpose of devising 'a global revolutionary strategy to counter the global strategy of American imperialism'.

This was the first step towards the start of global terrorism as we know it today. It is factual that nearly every dictatorship has escaped acts of terrorism, yet no democracy has been spared from acts of terrorism either on its soil or to its people. The United States, Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Sweden, France, Spain, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Austria, Greece, Turkey, Portugal, Japan and the Indian sub-continent have all suffered from some act of terrorism.

What has changed are the causes behind terrorism, not the nations being affected. Radical Islamic terrorism has now replaced the Communist Western influenced conflict during the Cold War. No democracy or religion is safe. In 1979 we saw the seizure of the holiest of all Islamic mosques in Mecca by 300 Russian trained Arab Muslims. Then there was the eleven OPEC ministers taken hostage by a German Palestinian team led by Carlos the Jackal. Who can forget the murder of eleven Israeli athletes in 1972 by the Palestinian Black September Group or the 1979 assassination of Britain's war hero Lord Mountbatten? Murders, assassinations and massacres by terrorists continued throughout the last two decades of the second millennium and into the next, and it is only now that Western democracies are slowly starting to recognise the nature of that threat—only now when terrorism is knocking on our doorstep!

Sadly, most Westerners today relate to terrorism starting with the cowardly acts of September 11 2001 in North America and the Ball bombings on 12 October 2002. Nothing could be further from the truth, as students of terrorism will testify. 'The purpose of terror is to terrorise. What matters is not the identity of their corpse but its impact on their audience' Lenin kept reminding his students. In Carlos Marighella's *Mini-Manual for Urban Guerrillas*, which has become the standard textbook for terrorists, he says 'terrorists should kill as a matter of course, since that is the urban guerrilla's sole reason for being'. He prioritises seven points 'for effective terrorist behaviour'—

1. Do not kill in anger
2. Do not kill on impulse
3. Kill as a matter of course
4. The use of violence must be deliberate and dispassionate
5. The use of violence must be carefully engineered for theatrical effect
6. Do not betray emotion
7. Do not kill in haste or improvisation.

These rules are not new. They have been used by terror groups since 1968 and include terrorist cells, or so-called freedom fighters, belonging to the Italian Brigades, Japanese and German Red Armies, Northern Ireland's IRA, Spain's ETA Militar, the Italian Front Line and The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, just to name a few. It was revealed in 1968 by Czechoslovak Communist Party defector General Jan Sejna that the former Soviet Union had, since 1964, increased its spending on supporting terrorism groups abroad by 1,000 per cent. In Italy in 1968 a blueprint for terrorists was published, *Italy 1968: Political Guerrilla Warfare*, which advised that the terrorist's task was to violate the law openly by challenging and outraging institutions and public order so that when the police and courts reacted as a result of these acts it would be easy to denounce its harshness and 'repressive dictatorial tendencies'. Does that sound familiar to anyone?

I was once asked, 'If a bull fighter fights bulls, then what does a freedom fighter fight?' That is where the biggest battle against terrorism begins—to understand the mechanisms behind their thinking and reasoning, their causes and their motivation. We who have lived a protected free existence, who have experienced more laughter than tears, who have more rights than most know what to do with or even want—some do not even want to vote, our most fundamental right to have a say in our country's future direction—we who live in united communities and a country not scarred by bombs, we who have not had to scramble for food, dodge bullets from birth, been taught to hate and had rifles thrust in our hands before we went to school—if we went to school at all—to kill another human being, we can never comprehend such hate-filled emotions. Who could comprehend that someone is prepared to strap explosives to their bodies and die? Who could comprehend such a radical act?

Radical acts call for determined measures, and Western nations must have the determination and courage to stand up now and face the possibility of what many feel is the inevitable, rather than leave it until terrorism becomes a way of life. In this, as in all things, the old adage 'prevention is better than cure' is appropriate, as is the scout motto 'be prepared'. With terrorism the aim is to terrorise, to stop people living their lives in their accustomed manner. The way we live may not be the best way according to others, but it is our way, the Australian way, and I value it strongly. I do not know anyone who wants to experience the heartbreak, destruction and oppression of terrorism or go to war, but to date no country subjected to it has had a choice. We can be prepared and pray for the best.

Australia is a big country and I support the need to have a national framework to meet the challenge of combating terrorism and transnational crime. Many people are very concerned about the Prime Minister's recent first strike declaration and are very uncomfortable with it. That concern must be recognised by this and all parliaments. Current events require the passing of this bill, and I, along with other honourable members, support this. I commend the bill to the House.