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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**THE SENATE**  
**PROOF**  
**ADJOURNMENT**  
**National Security**  
**SPEECH**

**Thursday, 15 October 2015**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

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## SPEECH

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<b>Speaker</b> Fawcett, Sen David	<b>Question No.</b>

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**Senator FAWCETT** (South Australia—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (18:42): I rise tonight to make a few comments about the topic of terror, how it affects our societies and how it is reported in the media. Recently Australia has had its attention focused on Parramatta and the murder of Curtis Cheng, and there has been a deal of discussion subsequent to that about how such a young person could be involved. In fact, we are now seeing people possibly as young as 12 who are caught up in a terrorism network. The question is: how can such a young person be so quickly radicalised to the point where they can enact that kind of violence and devastate an innocent family of a man who was going about his work and contributing to Australia? As others have pointed out, Mr Cheng probably represented the best about multicultural Australia—a person who had come from a completely different culture and was contributing to Australia in a very positive way.

I will go to the speech by Prime Minister Cameron in England earlier this year because I think it provides very useful discussion around this topic. He said:

... you do not have to support violence to subscribe to certain intolerant ideas which create a climate in which extremists can flourish.

He went on to say:

Some argue it's because of historic injustices and recent wars, or because of poverty and hardship. This argument, what I call the grievance justification, must be challenged.

It is not only in Australia that we see grievances and people subscribing to intolerant ideas that create this environment where young people cause incredible harm and damage. We see almost nightly reporting of the violence that is occurring in Israel at the moment, but most of the reporting appears to be about the Palestinians who are shot, injured or arrested by the Israeli police. I think it is really important to get a balance to that. I condemn the violence from both sides, but it is important to see where the incitement for this particular round of violence is coming from.

So what do I mean by 'this particular round of violence'? I will quickly summarise it. On Tuesday morning in Jerusalem, two men boarded a bus and stabbed and shot Israeli citizens. They killed two people and wounded 16. At the same time, across another part of town, a Palestinian man drove his vehicle into a bus stop, got out of the car and started to attack the wounded people with a meat cleaver. Two additional stabbings took place at a bus stop and a cafe. And that was just on Tuesday. Earlier in the month, a couple driving through the West Bank were shot and killed in front of their four children. On the Sunday a police officer and a woman were injured when people tried to detonate explosives in their car. So there have been multiple attacks on people and security forces responding to that. There has been death and violence on both sides, but it is important that, when the media are reporting this and we are discussing it, we keep a balance on cause and effect.

Clearly, the security forces would be reacting and there would be lots of arguments about the long-term stability between those two groups of people. But, in this particular case, much of the upsurge in violence stems back to a speech given by Mr Abbas at the United Nations, where he made the claim that Israel was changing the long held status quo about access to the Temple Mount and the Al-Aqsa mosque. As a result, lots of people have been motivated, been incited, to take action to, in their view, protect the mosque. Despite the Israeli government giving repeated assurances and making repeated statements that that was not that case and that nothing had changed, just that statement at the United Nations has unleashed, it appears, this new wave of violence.

As we grapple with things in Australia, it is important that we recognise that there are strongly held views by different groups in our society. But we must be free to talk about the facts and we must be free to talk about the causes. People need to realise that you do not need to advocate the violence to create the environment within which some people can very quickly go to being interested in and in adherence of world views and ideas that are intolerant and—again, as Prime Minister Cameron said—are hostile to basic liberal values, such as democracy,

freedom or sexual equality and which actively promote discrimination, sectarianism or segregation. It is those kinds of ideas that can then very rapidly enable people to be radicalised from an extreme view to enacting violence as a result of that extreme view,

Here in Australia we need to be aware of that. We need to have the kind of freedom of speech that Senator Day was seeking to highlight in his bill earlier today—that we should not be dampening people's ability to have that free speech. I support Senator Day in his bill, which looks to remove the subjective tests of 'offend' or 'assault' from section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act. I believe it is important that our media is accurate, and I believe it is important as we look at events around the world where there is terror that we report accurately the casualties on both sides.

The last thing I would like to say is that in a society where we do value the life of individuals, particularly of young people, I condemn the violence that has taken the lives of so many innocents—young people as well as men and women going about their daily lives—and I call on all parties involved in that to have restraint and, particularly in this case, for President Abbas to not continue to put forward the view that a very sacred object for that community is under any kind of threat when, clearly, the facts are that it is not and there have been repeated and insistent statements that it is not. It is an issue that we do not need to be seeing inciting more violence, when there are enough long-term issues in that part of the world that need to be resolved.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator Fawcett. I remind senators that the legislation committees will be meeting to consider estimates, commencing on Monday, 19 October at 9 am. Program details will be published on the Senate website.

**Senate adjourned at 18:50**