



**PRIME MINISTER**

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STATEMENT ON PROTECTIVE SECURITY AND COUNTER-TERRORISM

Mr Speaker, all Members of Parliament will be aware of the tragic event which occurred on the morning of February the 13th outside the Sydney Hilton Hotel, where twelve Heads of Government assembled for the Commonwealth Regional Meeting. It was an event which brought home to every Australian that acts of terrorism can occur in this normally peaceable country.

The senseless murder of three innocent Australians - the third, a police constable died in hospital yesterday - demonstrated the indiscriminate nature of terrorist violence.

Terrorist acts are a violent assault upon the freedom of each and every Australian. The Australian people have a right to be protected against the actions of terrorists. Terrorism will not be tolerated in this country. That is the Government's position, and I am sure that it is the position of every Member of this House.

For some time, the Government has been concerned at the growing international trend to violence for political ends. In the past five years, according to evidence recently given to a U.S. Senate Committee there have been 1,800 major acts of terrorism around the world involving 512 deaths, 551 injuries and 363 kidnappings. Following on the events of last week, I now report to the Parliament and through the Parliament to the people of Australia on the actions the Government has taken and will take to guard against this evil.

On coming to office we were advised that changing world circumstances made it necessary to review the arrangements then existing to protect overseas visitors, members of the Diplomatic Corps and the Australian public against acts of violence. We have acted over the past two years to increase the effectiveness of these arrangements.

1. In 1976, the Government acted to improve the effectiveness of liaison and coordination between the various Commonwealth and State agencies and police authorities. To this end, the Protective Services Coordination Centre was established in the Department of Administrative Services. Its role is to plan, coordinate and initiate protective security arrangements for people holding high office visiting or present in Australia, and to coordinate counter-terrorist measures.

The Protective Services Coordination Centre is advised by a special Interdepartmental Committee on protection against violence. It maintains close liaison with appropriate Commonwealth and State authorities and agencies.

Contingency plans have been developed over a number of years to deal with any international terrorist incident which might occur either in Australia, or in another country affecting Australian lives and interests. These plans are being regularly updated. Simulated anti-terrorist exercises have been held with the States to test the effectiveness of existing arrangements, and adjustments have been made in the light of lessons learnt from these exercises.

2. The Government has increased the protection afforded to diplomatic representatives in Australia, particularly in the light of the incidents in recent times involving members of the Indian High Commission.

3. The Government has considered and accepted the basic conclusions of the Report by Mr Justice Hope on Intelligence and Security, and is acting to ensure his conclusions are put into effect.

Following the tragedy in Sydney on February 13th, the Commonwealth Heads of Government agreed to establish a working group, to be convened by Singapore, to explore ways in which collaboration can be enlarged, both regionally and internationally, in combating terrorism.

In addition, my Government has undertaken a further review of the totality of security arrangements against acts of terrorism. None of the old assumptions can be uncritically taken for granted. Each must be challenged and re-evaluated.

The Sydney tragedy underlines the importance of even more intensive development of cooperation between Commonwealth and State civil and police authorities. Immediately after the tragedy occurred, the Premier of New South Wales and I agreed that a complete review of security arrangements for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Regional Meeting was required, and security was further tightened. Given the additional strain on New South Wales Police, the Premier and I agreed that members of the Australian Defence Force would be used to supplement police resources, and the extent of the use of service personnel was determined in close consultation between the Commonwealth and the New South Wales authorities.

I would like to pay a tribute to the cooperation which the Commonwealth has had from the New South Wales Government. The New South Wales Premier, Mr Wran, put the security and safety of the people of New South Wales and of visiting delegations as his first priority after the bomb explosion in Sydney. He joined with me in a cooperative effort.

I would like to repeat and endorse the comments he made to the New South Wales Parliament, the day after the explosion:

"It is now the task of the Government, the Parliament, and the community to do everything possible to ensure that yesterday's scar does not permanently damage the fabric of our society.

"This will need vigilance, cooperation, unity, goodwill, and above all, a realisation that our young but great country is now part of a world in which international and internal violence and terrorism has become almost commonplace."

It is in recognition of these facts that we must build further on the past pattern of Commonwealth and State cooperation. As a result of the review which the Government has undertaken, it has been decided that further steps must be taken to fulfill its responsibility to safeguard our society while protecting the individual rights and liberties of all Australians.

The steps the Government proposes fall into two categories.

Immediate action will be taken in those areas where the experience of the last few weeks has made apparent the need for improvement. Additional measures which, by their nature, require further detailed examination will be taken on the advice of a review which the Government is establishing.

Clearly the cooperation of the States is indispensable and I shall be writing to the State Premiers on these issues.

The immediate measures which we propose are these:

1. We shall be proposing to the States the establishment of a Standing Advisory Committee on Commonwealth State Cooperation for Protection against Violence. The Committee, which I expect to be comprised of the most senior civilian and police officials, will be charged with the task of achieving the highest degree of efficient operation and cooperation on a nation-wide basis.
2. While selected Commonwealth and State Police are currently trained in counter-terrorist techniques, the Government believes that training in counter-terrorist strategy and tactics should be greatly intensified. To achieve this, experienced instructors will be obtained to provide appropriate training courses for police and relevant civil authorities. They will be drawn from the United Kingdom, and other nations with first-hand counter-terrorist experience. I believe this training is necessary for our police forces, and that such a programme would also assist the States.

In addition, funds will be made available to enable more State, Territorial and Commonwealth police to be sent overseas to gain experience in the most modern methods of preventing and dealing with all forms of terrorism.

3. I am also proposing to the Premiers a total review of the adequacy and mutual compatibility of police equipment. The review should examine police communications systems and determine the need for a common and secure nation-wide police communication network. The Commonwealth will discuss with the States the provision of financial assistance to ensure that essential equipment is made available.

All Honourable Members will agree with me that the protection of our society - and all the people who live and work in it - is of the utmost importance. I am convinced all Premiers share this view. The prospects of effective cooperation are real.

I also inform the House that Sir Robert Mark, who has recently retired as Commissioner of London Metropolitan Police (New Scotland Yard) has, at the Government's request, made himself immediate available to advise on the organisation of police resources in the Commonwealth area and measures for protective security and counter-terrorism.

In addition to these immediate measures, the Government believes it of the utmost importance that a review be undertaken of the whole area of protective security in Australia by a person who has an appreciation of intelligence and security operations, and a concern for the liberties of individual men and women of Australia. I am happy to be able to advise the House that the Premier of New South Wales has agreed to make Mr Justice Hope available to carry out this review, and I thank him for his prompt cooperation.

I have received from the Leader of the Opposition a thoughtful and constructive letter which manifests a clear concern both for security and civil liberties. The Government, however, concluded that a review conducted by Mr Justice Hope would be the most effective and appropriate way to proceed, and that the terms of the review embrace the very proper concerns of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Justice Hope will be empowered to undertake a fully comprehensive review. The matters he will consider will include:

- a) Relationships between State, Territorial and Commonwealth Police, and between law enforcement agencies, intelligence and other relevant civilian authorities.

This would include the particular case of relationships between ASIO and the Special Branches of State police forces on which I have already been in communication with the Premiers.

- b) Arrangements to achieve coordination of assessments of security risks and the communication of these assessments to relevant agencies, and authorities.

- c) Clarification and provision of guidelines on the division of responsibilities between police forces, and between them and other agencies.
- d) Advice on further measures for coordination.

For instance, whether it is desirable or possible in law, to provide for a single police commander in given situations.

For example, if an incident occurs in New South Wales, should a senior New South Wales officer be in charge, not only of New South Wales police but also of available Commonwealth forces and instrumentalities.

- e) The possibility of establishing in each State a standing combined operational and intelligence advisory body to underpin and facilitate the work of State and Commonwealth agencies, particularly to assist coordination by commanders where more than one police force is involved.
- f) The relationship between the Defence Force and civilian authorities in the matter of civilian security.
- g) Security and protective arrangements in force in all Commonwealth Departments and authorities, and the capacity of Departments and authorities to provide support to the general protective security effort in various situations.
- h) Examining the need for Commonwealth and State promulgation of guidelines, public announcements, the passage of legislation or other measures which may be necessary to secure a coordinated and effective basis for protection against violence.
- i) The overall balancing of the interests of security and the rights of private citizens.
- j) Recommending the invitation of such overseas experts to advise and report on the foregoing matters as he may judge desirable.

These are the broad areas which Mr Justice Hope will examine. The Commonwealth will be discussing them with the States and stands ready to amend them if necessary in the light of such discussions.

The introduction of any legislation as a result of Mr Justice Hope's review will, of course, present the opportunity for Parliamentary examination of the relevant issues.

I should also add that Ministers and their Departments have been asked to ensure that their protective security arrangements are fully adequate. The review to be undertaken by Mr Justice Hope does not detract in any way from this responsibility.

Mr Speaker, I believe this Parliament and the Parliaments of the States recognise their overriding obligation to take all necessary steps to protect Australians from acts of terrorism, while protecting individual personal liberties.

I recall in this context the statement in the Rockefeller Reports on the CIA quoted by Mr Justice Hope in his fourth report on intelligence and security:

"...in the final analysis public safety and individual liberty sustain one another."

The measures which have been announced today strike the balance between the need to respond decisively to the threat of terrorism and the imperative of preserving Australia's character as an open society and the democratic freedoms we all hold paramount.

Terrorism is a crime against every Australian. It will not be tolerated, either by the people of Australia or by their Parliamentary representatives.

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