

What is the Greatest Threat – Global Warming or Terrorism?

Address to Canterbury Rotary Club, 19 March 2007

By Des Moore

You may have gathered from the outline of my activities that, both during my 28 years in Treasury and since, I have had an active interest in the role of governments and the policies they pursue or ought not to pursue. Of course, although our democracies are what Winston Churchill jokingly described as the worst form of government, they are better than those that have been tried elsewhere from time to time. But you will understand a degree of scepticism on my part about the usefulness of governments given that my experience included being a chief adviser briefly to Jim Cairns when, instead of doing his job as Treasurer, he spent much of his time mooching with Morosi! I can assure you that being a senior Treasury officer when Gough Whitlam was Prime Minister was indeed a unique experience in more ways than one.

During those 28 years in Treasury my contacts with politicians made me increasingly aware of the importance of an idea developed in America and described as public choice theory. The promulgation of this idea in the US confirmed my growing realisation that the natural instinct of politicians and bureaucrats is to expand their roles by intervening in the operation of the economy and society generally. The usual justification for such intervention is that it will improve the public good. But what they sometimes forget to mention is that it is also in their own interests because it increases their political power and importance. When there is a problem of one kind or another most of us still have an inherent tendency to look to the government to “fix it”.

This is particularly relevant to the two questions I want to address this evening - but to which I suggest completely different answers in regard to the role government should play.

My first question is - how seriously should we take the recent surge – explosion might be a better word - of dire warnings of perceived threats from rising temperatures, first from Al Gore’s film “An Inconvenient Truth”, then from the Stern Review of the Economics of Climate Change, and finally¹ from the Summary for Policy Makers by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on “Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis”? These warnings all call for drastic, early action by governments to deal with the perceived threats. Their argument is that we can’t just let things go on as they are because the normal response of the private sector in the market place to temperature

¹ The IPCC report is not in fact “final”. A “full” report, reportedly running to over 500 pages, will supposedly provide detailed back-up for the summary. This in itself is rather remarkable ie it could be taken to suggest that the back-up will be “adjusted” to ensure it supports the summary, rather than the other way around that one would expect.

increases would be too late to prevent serious damage to economies and in some cases to societies more generally.²

This argument reflects what economists sometimes call “market failure”, meaning that individual businesses or persons are judged as lacking the necessary incentive or the resources to remedy the perceived problem by acting on their own behalf. However, my contention is that the case for major government intervention to “keep us cool” has not been made and that, if further increases in average temperature were to occur, the private sector would adequately handle it over time.

By contrast, the answer to my second question on the threat from terrorism is that it is seriously serious and that we do need *more* government intervention to reduce the potential for Islamic extremists to take destructive action. The Director General of ASIO recently pointed out that “a terrorist attack in Australia is feasible and could well occur”, with the main terrorist threat coming from “Islamic extremists connected to or –just as importantly – inspired by al-Qa’ida”. My contention is that to deal with this threat a completely new approach to criminal law and its enforcement is needed, which the government has started to implement. But these changes need to be taken further and extended also to immigration. The opponents of such changes argue that the problem is exaggerated, that the counter terrorism legislation already passed is excessive and an unwarranted threat to human liberties and human rights generally, and that there should be no “discrimination” in immigration policy.

Let me now consider these questions in a bit more detail.

Global Warming

I want to start by recalling the long history of doom and gloom predictions about the likely course of human activity. Way back in 1798, for example, Thomas Malthus postulated in his “Essay on the Principle of Population” an “inevitable” tendency for population to outrun available subsistence. Jumping ahead 170 odd years, four scientists from the Club of Rome got much publicity in 1972 when they argued in “The Limits to Growth” that developing shortages of resources required population to be “stabilized” and in his 1971 “The Population Bomb” biologist Professor Ehrlich predicted early serious shortages of food unless population growth was reduced to zero. A similar theme was advanced in “A Blueprint for Survival” signed in 1972 by a large number of eminent scientists, including five Fellows of the Royal Society and sixteen holders of science

² The Stern Review claims that “Our actions over the coming few decades could create risks of major disruption to economic and social activity, later in this century and in the next, on a scale similar to those associated with the great wars and economic depression of the first half of the 20th century”. Such major disruption would include the flooding of low-lying areas by rising sea levels, causing not only deaths but also an enormous refugee problem; the spread of diseases such as malaria that are supposedly confined to tropical areas ; huge changes in the nature and location of present world food production; the wiping out of wildlife habitats, particularly those of such photogenic animals as polar bears ; increased frequency of natural disasters such as floods and hurricanes; and even the “shutting down” of the Gulf Stream, with incalculable consequences for those areas whose climate it currently affects.

chairs in British universities. This Blueprint was described as a “major contribution to the current debate” in a letter to The Times signed by another 150 scientists, including nine more fellows of the Royal Society and 20 more university science professors.

Why have these –and many other - gloomy and totally erroneous predictions occurred? This is not easy to answer. But the long history of apocalyptic statements and writings foretelling death or disasters, even the end of the world, in certain circumstances may derive from the religious notion that there is a day of final judgment. Humans have developed an inbuilt tendency to include in their thinking what might be the worst outcome, such as if a period of bad weather occurs and is maintained for some time. Today we look to scientists rather than preachers to analyse such developments and to provide recommendations as to whether anything needs to be done. Although that should provide a more rational approach, it is surprising that many analyses by scientists themselves seem to downgrade the potential for technological and other scientific advances to overcome or at least alleviate perceived problems faced by mankind.

When I did my own research at the Royal College of Defence Studies in London in the early 1970s on the predicted running out of resources thesis, I was astonished to discover that the scientist doom and gloom analysts had made only limited allowance for new technological developments, even for new discoveries or replacements to existing resources. A popular theme at the time was that the exhaustion of oil supplies would itself soon cause a major reduction in economic growth. But such propositions took little account of the likelihood that the natural operations of markets, particularly through the price mechanism, would lead either to new discoveries or to the development of alternative fuel sources to replace oil.

Let me now comment on the recent warnings of dire consequences from further temperature increases. As I am not a scientist, I cannot delve into the science of climatology itself although it is important to recognise that this science is only a new one dealing with extremely complicated relationships. Based on my own observations and examining those of other qualified analysts, I believe it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that there has been a gross overstatement by some scientists of the seriousness of threats and that this leads me to conclude that there is no case for major government intervention to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, which come primarily from use of fossil fuels³. Time permits me to mention only briefly a few relevant points that I believe justify my conclusion.

First, although there has been an increase in average global temperatures over the past 100 years, historical evidence suggests that temperature levels have been as high if not higher in periods in the past and that this did not then have adverse effects on societies.

³ The greenhouse effect arises from what happens after the sun warms the earth. That warming (which would leave a very cold earth if it did not occur) leads in turn to a radiation of warmth back into space, where some of that radiation is “lost” but some is absorbed by greenhouse gases. The greenhouse gases then radiate part of the absorbed warmth back to earth and that process is described as the greenhouse effect. The main greenhouse gases are water vapour (which is naturally occurring and is the main one), carbon dioxide (only about 2-4%), methane and nitrous oxide. The burning of fossil fuels and deforestation are the main contributors to carbon dioxide emissions.

Indeed, rather to the contrary: unsurprisingly, significant economic and other advances seem to have occurred in past warm periods. One example is that in the so-called Medieval Warm Period (roughly, 800-1,100 AD) the Norsemen were growing crops and grazing cattle in what they then accurately called Greenland. In the Roman Warm period (from 250 to 0 BC)⁴ grapes were planted and wine produced in Scotland – doubtless before the Scots were “forced” to drink whisky! An American geologist recently identified ten past periods that have experienced swings in temperature that were 20 times greater than the warming over the past century.⁵ This provides a marked contrast with various alarmist predictions of adverse effects from temperature increases.

But what, you may ask, about the conclusions of the believers in global warming that even the relatively small 0.7 of a degree (centigrade) temperature increase over the past century has *already* started to have adverse and alarming effects in causing melt downs of the great ice sheets covering Antarctica and Greenland or the floating Arctic sea ice? It is certainly true that if large meltdowns of those ice sheets were to occur sea levels would rise and flooding would follow. However, as John Stone has pointed out in a recent article on “Global Warming Scare-Mongering”⁶, scientific records actually suggest that the overall size of the ice sheets of Antarctica and Greenland has, if anything, increased. Further, any warming of the Arctic would have no significant effect on sea levels as, unlike the other two, the sea ice is already floating.

Other points relevant to the debate over the effects of temperatures increases include, first, the incorrect claim in the Gore film and elsewhere that polar bears are finding it difficult to survive because of melting ice (it appears in fact that in most places they are actually increasing, partly because of the success of environmentalists in reducing the number of seal pups being slaughtered). Second, the incorrect claim in earlier IPCC reports that higher temperatures would increase the incidence of malaria because mosquitoes would spread into former cooler areas (this claim appears to have been dropped after Professor Paul Reiter pointed out that his detailed research on malaria showed mosquitoes exist in quantities in the Arctic and that malaria has caused many deaths in relatively cold areas), that is, malaria is a function of poverty and preventive measures, not temperature. Third, the incorrect claim that warmer temperatures are leading, or will do so, to an increased incidence of hurricanes and storms (distinguished meteorologist Professor Lindzen⁷ points out in the film on “The Great Global Warming Swindle”, shown on Chanel 4 in London a week or so ago *after* the latest IPCC report was published, that the incidence of such weather is mainly determined by temperature differences between the tropics and the poles. This means that an increase in temperatures would likely *reduce* the incidence of extreme weather).

⁴ For further analysis of these periods and subsequent ice ages, see “Nine Facts About Climate Change” by Ray Evans (Published by The Lavoisier Group, October 2006).

⁵ Report in New York Times (“From a Rapt Audience, a call to Cool the Hype”, 13 March 2007) of an address to a “crowded” US geological society meeting by Emeritus Professor of Geology, Dr Don. J. Easterbrook in October 2006.

⁶ National Observer, No.71, Summer 2006/07, pages 29-41(Published by the Council for the National Interest). See page 6 for this reference.

⁷ Lindzen, who is a professor of meteorology at MIT and was a contributing author to the latest IPCC report, is widely acknowledged as an expert climatologist.

My general conclusion on temperature changes is that the increases since 1975 and existing levels are of little or no concern when viewed from an historical perspective and that it is wrong to suggest that such increases are already threatening meltdowns of ice sheets.

My second main point is that, although carbon dioxide emissions have grown strongly as industrialization and economic growth generally has increased over the past 100 years, there appears to be little or no direct connection between emission and temperature increases.⁸ For example, even though the world experienced probably its fastest rate of economic growth ever between 1940 and 1975, average temperatures then fell slightly⁹, contributing at the time to predictions of an ice age by some scientists¹⁰. Further, as pointed out by John Stone¹¹, an analysis by leading meteorological scientist, Professor Richard Lindzen of MIT, concludes that any warming effect from carbon dioxide emissions *diminishes* progressively and that this is already happening to a significant extent ie the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere may have reached a level at which it is ceasing to have a significant greenhouse effect. This important but little recognized point is analysed in more detail in the publication by Ray Evans on “Nine Facts About Climate Change”.¹² Also, as pointed out by authoritative scientists interviewed in the “The Great Global Warming Swindle” film, historical analyses of ice cores suggest that past temperature increases *preceded* increases in carbon dioxide. This is not only the opposite conclusion to that portrayed in the Gore film but also runs counter to the general claim made by global warming believers.

The sum total of this brief commentary on the possible relationship between increases in carbon dioxide emissions and temperature makes it very difficult, I suggest, to accept that the first is the principal cause of the other.

Third, this leads to the question of other possible causes of the rise in temperatures over the past century. I might first say that signals of concern and alarm about warming are reportedly being emitted from Mars! Seriously, there is some evidence suggesting that other planets have been warming in recent years. If correct, this would provide a *prima facie* basis for concluding that the extent of the sun’s activity could be a major determinant of temperature increases.

⁸ However, the recent summary report of the IPCC asserts that “most of the observed increase in globally averaged temperatures since the mid-20th century is very likely due to the observed increase in anthropogenic greenhouse gas concentrations”

⁹ Those scientists who are global warming believers argue that there were temporary influences in the atmosphere, such as aerosols, that stopped or reduced the warming. However, there is dispute as to the extent, if any of such influences.

¹⁰ Including one, Dr James Hansen, who is now a leading advocate for the global warming thesis and who advised Gore on the production of his film.

¹¹ Op Cit

¹² Op Cit

This is also the view taken by some of the leading scientists interviewed in the Swindle film, where it is strongly put that variations in sunspot activity are closely co-related with variations in temperature¹³ and that the sun seems to have been much more active in recent years. These scientists also point out that such an increase in the activity of the sun would have resulted in fewer cosmic rays from exploded stars getting through and forming clouds that would otherwise reduce the heat coming from the sun.

But the conclusion that the sun has played the major role in determining temperatures and human activity a minor role is not made only by the scientists in the Swindle film. Indeed, one authoritative commentator¹⁴ has argued that it is legitimate to conclude that an analysis that can be *derived from the IPCC report itself* suggests that about three-quarters of the rise in temperature over the past 100 years is attributable to natural causes. He also refers to supporting analyses by other scientists, including one claiming that in the past 50 years the sun “has been hotter, for longer, than at any time in the previous 11,400 years”.

As I have said, the factors contributing to climate change are complex and it would be wrong to accept as conclusive these analyses of the role of the sun. Equally, however, it can legitimately be said that they raise very serious doubts about the IPCC claim that consulted scientists are “90 per cent certain” that human activity has been the main cause of temperature increases.

This leads to my fourth main question – which is how is it possible for believers in human activity being the principal temperature driver to justify the claim that there is a “scientific consensus” on this matter? Even leaving aside the point that the idea of having a consensus is itself unscientific, the short answer is that there is no substantive basis for this claim. The dissenting scientists interviewed in the Swindle film – at least 15 on my count – make that clear but there is no doubt that, while in a minority, there are many others who are also dissenters. These include, for example, 61 prominent international scientists, including Australian meteorologist William Kininmouth, who wrote to the Canadian Prime Minister in January 2007 denying any consensus and calling for “balanced, comprehensive public-consultation sessions” on the climate change issue. Similarly, a senior Canadian journalist has published interviews with ten prominent scientists with varying degrees of dissenting opinions.¹⁵ Although a little dated, it is

¹³ This is based on analyses by several scientists and covers analyses extending over varying periods of time. Of particular interest, however, is the account by a Dr Corbyn of his use of variations in sunspot activity to make better predictions of the weather in recent years than the British Meteorological Office. It should be noted that one scientist interviewed in this film, Professor Carl Wunsch of MIT, has claimed subsequently that his views were taken out of context and their meaning distorted. However, an analysis by Lawrence Solomon of the Toronto National Post (14 March 2007) of what Wunsch *actually* said suggests that he was not misrepresented in the film to any significant extent. Such claims of misrepresentation have, of course, also been made by scientists who have contributed to IPCC reports.

¹⁴ “Errors Covertly Corrected By The IPCC After Publication *And* Uncorrected Errors by Al Gore” by Lord Monckton of Brenchley, March 2007 (Published by Center for Science and Public Policy, Washington, DC).

¹⁵ “The Ten Deniers, Against the Grain: Some Scientists deny global warming exists” by Lawrence Solomon, National Post, Canada 2 February 2007 (LawrenceSolomon@nextcity.com). It should be noted that some scientists appear in all these references.

worth recalling that in 1998 over 17,000 scientists signed a petition in the US declaring that “there is no convincing scientific evidence that human release of carbon dioxide, methane, or other greenhouse gases is causing or will, in the foreseeable future, cause catastrophic heating of the Earth’s atmosphere and disruption of the Earth’s climate”.¹⁶

My final point on the global warming issue is that, even if it is judged that we should accept the possibility that human activity *might* be a major contributor to temperature increases, the serious questions and lack of agreement amongst scientist (and others) I have outlined should rule out the adoption by governments of urgent and dramatic action to reduce emissions. The reality is that the certainty thesis has no substantive basis¹⁷. Even if increases in temperature were to continue at about the same rate as in the past century, the normal operations of market economies would be able to handle most problems that might emerge. Moreover, the next generation will be much richer and have a much greater capacity to provide the resources needed to deal with such problems. The three scaremongering reports have seriously underestimated the capacity of humans to both innovate and adapt to change as they have done over the past century in company with the relatively small increase in temperature that has occurred,

Terrorism

So much for climate terrorism. What about the real thing and the protection of civil liberties?

As I have left only limited time to deal with the threat from destructive terrorist acts, my points will be brief.

First, in a speech last year on the criminal justice system and the difficulties of deporting criminals, UK Prime Minister Tony Blair hit the nail on the head when he said the issue “is not an argument about whether we respect civil liberties or not; but whose take priority. It is not about choosing hard line policies over an individual’s rights. It’s about which human rights prevail”.¹⁸ At bottom we all have the fundamental rights to life and limb, and to free choice in how to live, what to believe, and how to behave.

¹⁶ Initiated by the then immediate past President of the US National Academy of Sciences, Professor Frederick Seitz.

¹⁷ The argument that increased certainty reflects improved modelling cuts no ice: the outcomes from models are only as good as the weightings given by the modellers to the various possible influences. As pointed out by one of the scientists in the Swindle film, all the models used by the IPCC *assume* human influence (but presumably to differing extents). However, if the modelling has improved so much why is there a need to use so many different models, why do they all produce different results, and why do they all have to be tuned (ie adjusted) to make them more “realistic”?

¹⁸ Mr Blair made this comment in a speech on “Our Nation’s Future – Criminal Justice System”, 23 June 2006 (see his web site). Also relevant is the comment by the European Union’s Commissioner for Justice, Freedom and Security, as reported by Paul Kelly in an article in the The Weekend Australian on 10-11 June (“Europe Juggles Influx”), that “We cannot accept people entering Europe, working in Europe and refusing to accept our values, the equality of men and women, and full respect for human dignity. We cannot accept, in the name of different religions, people violating equality between men and women. There is growing awareness that the only way to preserve our identity, culture and history, and guarantee the possibility of

Second, since September 2001 the Australian Government has implemented many counter-terrorism measures,¹⁹ including the passage of 25 pieces of legislation dealing with terrorist acts, principally designed to create offences and procedures **before** a terrorist act is committed. Previous legislation dealt largely with offences **after** an act of terrorism had been completed, such as hijacking an aircraft, and as pointed out by the head of Attorney General's department, traditional offences would "not easily have covered" preparatory acts and would not have covered some at all.²⁰

Third, while the Government has not justified the measures on the basis of actions or threats from any single group, it undoubtedly reflects a realization that a very serious threat now exists from extremist Islamic groups²¹. Their stated aim is to establish a theocratic state operating under Sharia law which could apply to a wide range of social behaviour, extinguish all religions except Islam, and subordinate the role of women.²² Although such objectives may appear to us as absurd and unachievable in a "civilized" country, there is a growing trend for European governments to accept Muslim communities as separate communities within the state.²³ More generally, author Mark Steyn argues that, if the low fertility rates of European "Westerners" and the high fertility rates of Muslims continue, Europe will effectively become Muslim dominated ("Eurabia") in the not too distant future.²⁴

Fourth, to achieve their objectives the believers in extremist ideologies are prepared to use extreme and widespread violence²⁵, applied indiscriminately, including to fellow

foreigners coming here, is by setting up a basic framework of rights and values. The models in Europe have failed. The multicultural [model] has failed. The model of forced integration has also failed. In France, you see young people using violence to reaffirm their Muslim identity ...” Also worth examining in this context are a book by Sydney Morning Herald journalist, Paul Sheehan, entitled “Girls Like You” (published this year by Pan Macmillan) and an article by John Stone entitled “The Muslim Problem and What to do About It” in the September 2006 edition of Quadrant magazine.

¹⁹ See Australian Government paper on “Protecting Australia Against Terrorism 2006” outlining counter-terrorism policy and arrangements.

²⁰ Address on “Australian Government Initiatives and Policy Directions after the London Bombings of 2005” by Mr Robert Cornall AO to a conference on “Safeguarding Australia 2006”, 19 September 2006.

²¹ Important here were the London bombings of July last year, not to mention the recent detected attempts to blow up half a dozen planes coming into Heathrow when the fasten seat belts sign came on.

²² The extent to which Sharia law applies in Muslim countries varies from country to country, with Malaysia said to be the most liberal and Saudi Arabia the most rigorous. A poll in Britain in 2006 found that four out of ten Muslims supported the introduction of Sharia law and in 2005 serious consideration was given in Canada to introducing certain aspects of such law as a means of resolving disputes between Islamic Canadians.

²³ One of the candidates in the forthcoming French Presidential election has offered government subsidies for mosques.

²⁴ See “America Alone The end of the world as we know it”, Mark Steyn (Published by Regency Publishing, Inc, Washington DC, 2006). Steyn points out that by 2050 “60% of Italians will have no brothers, no sisters, no cousins, no aunts, no uncles”.

²⁵ A vivid illustration is provided in the film United 83. But actual violence is only part of the story: the believers in the ideology also use threat of violence designed to inhibit critical commentary. British-Indian author, Salman Rushdie, has been subjected to frequent death threats on the ground that his *Satanic Verses* depicted Mohammed irreverently. In Australia the most senior Muslim cleric, Sheik Hilali, has called for the ostracisation of the chairman of the Islamic reference board, Dr Ameer Ali, established by the federal government because of critical comments of Mohammed made by Dr Ali.

Muslims. These people have little or no fear of death and are not deterred by the possibility of death or capture. In Australia, we are fortunate so far that planned criminal acts by Islamic extremists have been dealt with successfully by police and intelligence agencies. But the expansion of such agencies has been at considerable cost to the community and Islamic terrorist groups will likely develop better communications that evade detection by such agencies. Before too long such groups will also likely access more sophisticated weapons with the capacity to inflict even greater destruction than we see on our TV sets in overseas countries.

Violent happenings, and the use of threats of violence of one form or another, are also powerful instruments in forcing fellow Muslims to comply with extremist objectives. And they may help persuade some non-Muslims that the “solution” is not to give police more powers but to try to integrate Muslims and make them feel part of the community. But the spokesman for the Islamic Council of Victoria, Waleed Aly, recently urged that Muslims should not be pressured to assimilate: “life will make you integrate”, he claimed.²⁶

Fifth, assessments by security agencies suggest the threat of violence is extensive and may be increasing.²⁷ A British poll showed one quarter of the Muslim community supported the 7 July 2005 London suicide bomb attacks on buses and underground trains. A Pew Research Group survey after the Bali bombings showed that 10 per cent of Indonesians (18 million) supported the bombings and 65 per cent do not believe that the 9/11 attacks in the US were carried out by Arabs.

Although Australia’s Muslim population is small relative to most European countries, if a similar proportion exists here to those supporting the London incidents that would imply 75,000 supporters of Islamic terrorism in Australia. The potential threat is enhanced by the apparent reluctance of Muslim leaders to speak openly against Islamists within their communities, not to mention the support of destructive action given by some leaders. Of course, only a small proportion of Australian Muslims would themselves undertake terrorist acts: but many are also engaged in various support groups and many appear to be silent supporters.²⁸

²⁶ “Pressure to assimilate won’t work, leader warns”, Richard Kerbaj, *The Australian*, 5 March 2007

²⁷ *The Australian* reported on 6 October 2006 that the former head of ASIO, Dennis Richardson, now Australian Ambassador in Washington DC, told an audience at Georgetown University that Islamic terrorism has become a deeply interconnected global phenomenon and that it was a mistake to compartmentalise terrorist attacks without recognising the *growing* common ideological links between them. He also pointed out that since 9/11 more Australian civilians (100 in total) have been killed in terrorist attacks than citizens of other countries. More recently, Mr Richardson was reported by Paul Kelly as indicating that there is widespread acceptance in America that the war on terror will be a “long war” (“‘Long War’ has Just begun”, *The Australian*, 9 March).

²⁸ As the then head of ASIO, Mr Dennis Richardson, pointed out in an ABC interview on 23 March 2005, “the great majority of people in Australia who are assessed to have trained with Al-Qaeda and associated groups remain free in the community because, amongst other reasons, the relevant laws did not come into force until July 2002”.

To date there has been only one terrorism conviction in Australia²⁹ and, although one other conviction was overturned by the Victorian Court of Appeal on a technical issue relating to the admissibility of statements, the court found that “no question has arisen with respect to the truthfulness or reliability of those statements”. On appeal by the Australian Government, the case is now being reheard.³⁰ In addition, nine men in Sydney are being tried of acts in preparation of a terrorist act and thirteen have been committed to stand trial in Melbourne and charged with varying charges including ones relating to the preparation of a terrorist act. Other possible terrorist actions have almost certainly been stopped by intelligence and police agencies.³¹

What Further Action is Needed?

The avoidance to date of domestic terrorist acts by Islamist extremists must not be taken to mean that Australia faces only a minor risk of such acts. The functioning of our society remains under serious threat and that threat will likely increase. My contention is that there is a need for more government action to reduce the risk of violent destruction.

Time does not permit me to outline in detail what might be done to reduce the risk.³²

However, consistent with the moves already taken towards a new era of criminal law and its enforcement, police and intelligence agencies need to be given even further power to detain, interrogate and control suspected terrorists so as to minimize the risk of terrorist attacks **before** they occur.³³ The potential large number of victims means police and

²⁹ Mr Jack Roche pleaded guilty to conspiring to destroy diplomatic premises and was convicted before the anti-terrorism legislation was passed. Mr Faheem Lodhi was convicted under that legislation of offences related to the preparation of a terrorist act involving electricity supplies.

³⁰ Mr Jack Thomas was convicted for offences involving the receipt of money from a terrorist organisation and falsifying a passport. While he is now being retried he is subject to an interim control order. The need for the Government to appeal on a technicality illustrates the need for agencies to be given additional specific powers.

³¹ Britain’s top counter-terrorist police official, Peter Clarke, told a conference in Canberra last year that police had stopped at least five terrorist attacks since 7 July last year and that 90 people were awaiting trial on terrorism charges (see report by Patrick Walters entitled “Unclear and Present Danger”, *The Australian*, 23 September 2006).

³² A number of specific proposals are advanced by Anthony Bergin (Director of Research Programs at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute) in “A Flawed Plan of Attack for our Defence” published in *The Age* 25 Jan 2007.

³³ For example, the existing restrictions/procedures on the time allowed to interrogate suspects include the need to satisfy a court it is reasonably necessary to assist in preventing a terrorist act and make the normal maximum period of detention 24 hours. This is only 20 hours more than allowed for general offences. In extremely rare situations where a terrorist act has occurred or is imminent, that may be extended but only to 48 hours. Questioning of the person is not then permitted. Equally, control orders under the anti-terrorism legislation are not significantly different to the orders applying in apprehended violence cases, and parole orders for pedophiles restrict their movements and contacts. Such control orders are also subject to safeguards such as satisfying the issuing court they are necessary and not applying to persons under 16 years.

intelligence agencies must act early even if they are not certain they have foolproof information and even though relying on information alone makes conviction - even prosecution - less certain. Greater legitimization of such early action will impinge on civil liberties but the alternative may be the death of thousands of innocents. The consequences of that can scarcely be explained away by saying it would have been morally wrong to have restricted the liberty of some.

An additional form of government intervention that is needed is to tighten immigration eligibility so as to produce a major reduction in the entry of Muslims. To justify that one does not have to look further than the comment by the European Union's Commissioner for Justice, Freedom and Security, as reported by Paul Kelly in an article in the *The Weekend Australian* on 10-11 June ("Europe Juggles Influx"), that "We cannot accept people entering Europe, working in Europe and refusing to accept our values, the equality of men and women, and full respect for human dignity. We cannot accept, in the name of different religions, people violating equality between men and women. There is growing awareness that the only way to preserve our identity, culture and history, and guarantee the possibility of foreigners coming here, is by setting up a basic framework of rights and values. The models in Europe have failed. The multicultural [model] has failed. The model of forced integration has also failed. In France, you see young people using violence to reaffirm their Muslim identity ..."

It is surprising indeed that despite the increase in terrorist threats in Australia net arrivals of those born in Muslim countries have increased from 18.3 per cent of total arrivals in 1995-96 to 30.1 per cent in 2005-06.³⁴ Of course, any outright prohibition on entry of Muslims may now be difficult to achieve politically. However, it should be possible to institute administrative measures that would make it much harder for Muslims to become eligible for entry. These might include reducing immigration staffing for Muslim countries and a requirement for all migrant applicants to sign a formal statement of acceptance of the separation of Church and State and the equality of treatment of men and women and the rejection of certain cultural practices (such as female genital mutilation). Such a statement could include specific acceptance of deportation in the event the undertakings were not fulfilled.³⁵

CONCLUSION

I hope the arguments I have put tonight have persuaded you that there is a case for additional government intervention to deal with the extremist Islamic threats but no case for such intervention to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide.

³⁴ In 2005-06 net arrivals of those born in Muslim countries were 19,571 out of total net arrivals of 63,740 compared with 12,903 out of 70,469 in 1995-96. Although since 2002-03 the proportion of net arrivals from those born in Muslim countries has fallen from the peak of 40.9 per cent reached in that year, the net number has increased from 17,752 in that year.

³⁵ For further discussion of this issue, see "The Unmentionable Problem of Australian Citizenship" by John Stone (Published by National Observer, Council for the National Interest, Melbourne, No. 70, Spring 2006, pages 12-24)

