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Government 

**Discussion Papers 2007, no. 1**



# **Australia's Response to Tensions between Islam and the West since September 11**

**Michális S. Michael**



**Centre for Dialogue Discussion Paper 1  
2007**



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# *Introducing the Discussion Papers*

**A**ustralia is, by virtue of its history and its geography, a multi-ethnic, multi-faith society. Many Australian residents were not born in Australia and many more have parents who were born overseas. Our own Muslim population is now well in excess of 300,000. In addition, all of Australia's nearest neighbours are societies whose cultures and religions are strikingly different from the Anglo-Celtic mainstream of Australian society. Our two nearest Asian neighbours, Indonesia and Malaysia, have large Muslim majorities. Many Indonesians and Malaysians now live in Australia, and we host large numbers of students from these and other Southeast Asian countries. Finally, an increasing number of Australian citizens visit these countries, whether for study, business or pleasure. Australians have therefore no option but to learn to live harmoniously and co-operatively across the cultural and religious divide.

In recent years, and particularly since September 11, Australian multiculturalism has been severely tested. In Australia, as in many other parts of the Western world, sharp tensions have arisen with the Muslim world – not just with Muslim governments and political movements but with our own Muslim minority. Since September 11 there has been a noticeable increase in reported instances of harassment and culturally offensive behaviour and language aimed at Muslims generally. The difficulties and tensions that have arisen in our treatment of refugees and asylum seekers are in part related to widely held perceptions of and attitudes to Islam.

- We face, then, a critical need for informed public discussion. The aims of this dialogue are: to ask how tensions have arisen, to identify the factors which are contributing to mistrust and suspicion, and to establish the necessary conditions for trust, mutual respect, dialogue and co-operation. We have come to appreciate the need for such informed discussion through a combination of factors and sources:
- The research that we have been doing at La Trobe University over the last six years;
- The experiences of Muslim communities in Australia over the last few years – as reported to a number of Muslim organisations (several of which are partners with the Centre for Dialogue);
- Reports produced by such bodies as the Equal Opportunity Commission of Victoria;
- Changes in public rhetoric and media comment, which have deeply troubled community organisations striving for a harmonious and creative multi-ethnic and multi-faith society;

- The findings of the one-year pilot project, 'Promoting Inter-Cultural Dialogue in Victoria: A Pilot Project', jointly funded by the La Trobe University Collaborative Grant, the Uniting Church, the Reichstein Foundation and Niwano Peace Foundation (a report of this project is available on request).

As a contribution to public debate, the Centre for Dialogue at La Trobe University (officially launched in August 2006) is publishing three interrelated discussion papers that form part of a larger project that explores Australian government, media and community reaction to tensions between Islam and the West since September 11. The Centre for Dialogue warmly acknowledges the support extended to this project by the Scanlon Foundation and by the Victorian Government through the provision of a Victorian Community Support Grant from the Community Support Fund.

The three papers address several key questions: How has the Australian government responded to international conflict? How has international conflict impacted on Australia's relations with its Muslim neighbours, on its immigration and refugee policies, and on community relations within Australia? How have the media handled community relations, and in particular the tensions which have arisen during these difficult times? How have Australia's Muslim communities, especially in Victoria, responded to these events and to government policies? What are the possibilities for more effective consultation and dialogue involving governments at Federal and State level, Muslim and other religious and ethnic communities, the media and the wider community?

These three papers, including this paper authored by Dr Michális S. Michael, address some if not all of these questions. They offer a necessarily selective overview of a complex and contentious set of issues. While not endorsing the particular views of any of the authors, the Centre is pleased to publish these papers in the hope that the analysis they contain as well as their key finding and recommendations will stimulate informed and constructive dialogue.

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# Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the valuable assistance of Simon Watmough and Aran Martin in researching this paper. Simon's contribution was especially significant in shaping sections of the paper and his input is much appreciated. I would also like to acknowledge the invaluable comments and suggestions of Joseph Camilleri throughout the conception, planning and writing of this paper. His and the Centre for Dialogue's assistance have been pivotal to the materialisation of this paper.

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# Abstract

This paper examines the impact of international conflicts involving the Muslim world upon Australia's multicultural society by studying the government's responses to tensions between Islam and the West since September 11. Specifically, it surveys the government's participation in the 'war on terror', other aspects of Australia's foreign and security policies, including the relationship with the United States, the emergence of immigration and refugee flows as national security issues, and the subsequent impact of all this on multiculturalism and in particular on Australia's Muslim community.

The paper has two main components: (1) a detailed survey of government policy pronouncements and the implications of the use of political rhetoric; and (2) a survey of a series of events, developments and case studies, including the anti-terrorist legislation and the establishment of the Prime Minister's Muslim Community Reference Group.

This paper challenges the argument that foreign policy is inconsequential for social policy, intercommunal, interethnic and interreligious relations. Internalisation of the 'war on terror' has reinforced a negative portrayal of Islam and Muslims in Australia by blurring the dividing line between 'Islam' on the one hand and 'extremism' and 'terrorism' on the other. The evidence suggests that government statements and policies more generally have had the consequence, unintended though it may be, of provoking apprehension and resentment amongst a wide cross-section of the Australian Muslim community. A major finding of this paper is that unless care is taken, it is not inconceivable that the hitherto harmonious relationship between Muslims and other sections of Australia's community could be unnecessarily endangered. The paper concludes with a number of practical recommendations which can be taken at government and community level to ensure that Australia continues to function as a cohesive culturally and religiously diverse society.

# Introduction

Until September 2001 there was little by way of governmental policy pertaining to the threat – whether internal or external – of terrorism to Australia.<sup>1</sup> The last wave of international terrorism occurred during the 1970s as an outgrowth of radical Marxism, asymmetrical national liberation struggles, and technological developments.<sup>2</sup> Despite sporadic incidents of terrorism such as the CHOGM (Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting) Sydney Hilton bombing in 1978 and the assassination of a Turkish consul in 1980, terrorism was considered a foreign phenomenon restricted to monitoring of the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation), Ustashi, PKK (Patiya Karkerên Kurdistan – Kurdistan Workers' Party), and ANC (African National Congress) sympathisers in Australia.<sup>3</sup>

The terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001 changed all that. For John Howard, who was in Washington D.C., for a state visit, September 11 had a profound personal effect.<sup>4</sup> Prior to becoming prime minister, Howard had shown little interest in foreign affairs, which sat uncomfortably with his preference for a pragmatic approach to domestic politics. As we will see below, September 11 would prove an epiphany for Howard transforming him into the staunchest member of the 'coalition of the willing' and one of the strongest advocates of the 'war on terror'.

This paper focuses on how the Australian government has handled the tensions between Islam and the West since September 11. In particular it assesses the Australian government's response to international conflicts involving Islam and examines how this external domain was internalised, and its impact in the area of community relations generally and multicultural affairs in particular. This is done by examining key governmental decisions,

the statements of key decision makers (in particular prime minister, minister of foreign affairs, attorney general and defence minister), through press releases, policy statements, interviews and various speeches.

The key questions to be addressed include: What has been the Australian government's response to international conflicts involving the Muslim factor? How has the 'war on terror' been internalised in Australia? How have these international conflicts affected Australia's relations with its Muslim neighbours? How has the Australian government handled Muslim-non-Muslim community relations? How have Muslim communities responded to government policies? Is there a correlation between governmental policy and the emergence of 'Islamophobia' in Australia? Is there a correlation between the government's handling of the 'war on terror', intercommunal relations, the rise of nationalism, the difficulties besetting multiculturalism, and electoral politics? (Bringing into focus the broader question of Australia's fear of 'others', of the 'stranger' and non-White races).

The analysis to be pursued here is distinctive in three ways: it connects international relations and foreign and national security policy with domestic and inter-communal relations. Furthermore, it explores whether the actions and pronouncements of political leaders may have, unwittingly, infused or perpetuated a climate of insecurity in Australia. Finally, it examines how governmental public policy has vilified a community by association through blurring the difference between 'moderates' and 'fundamentalist' Muslims.

# 1 The Road to Baghdad

...at no stage should any Australian regard this (September 11 attack) as something that is just confined to the United States. It is an attack upon the way of life we hold dear in common with the Americans.<sup>5</sup>

Prime Minister John Howard, 14/09/2001

To comprehend Australia's response on a range of issues, directly or indirectly, related to Islam and the 'war on terror', it is first necessary to understand the government's underlying mindset, profoundly influenced by the Prime Minister's own understanding of Australia's place in the world. Like US President George W. Bush, Howard believes that 11 September 2001 was a historical turning point that changed the world, propelling it into an 'age of terror', heralding a 'struggle for civilization'.<sup>6</sup> Nowhere is this best outlined than in the Prime Minister's October 2001 address to the Australian Defence Association. The personal impact that September 11 had on Howard can be ascertained from the following extract:

I have to say that of all of the events that I have been in any way touched by in the 27 year that I've been in public life, none has had a more profound impact on me than has this. None has quite ripped what I might broadly describe as the younger generation of Australians than has this.<sup>7</sup>

The biblical dimensions of the 'war on terror' for Howard, seen as a universal struggle between 'good' and 'evil', is highlighted in the following observation:

September 11 was a rare moment when evil emerged to challenge the human decency upon which our democratic societies are built. It was not a local challenge, it was global, and it called for a global response.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, Australia's Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer declared that:

Innocence, security and liberty came under attack on September 11<sup>th</sup>. As Australians and New Zealanders, I am certain that those who are lost to us would want to repair the assault on our innocence, to restore our sense of security, and to renew our rights and freedoms.<sup>9</sup>

As seen from the following passage, for the Prime Minister September 11 was considered not only as an attack on the United States, but also on Australia:

This was not simply an attack on America. We were all the targets. ... In a very direct way, September 11 was an attack on the right of Australians ... to go about their daily lives and to move around the world with ease and freedom and without fear.<sup>10</sup>

And from his interview with John Laws on 12 September 2001:

PRIME MINISTER: ... it's an attack on all of us. And no imaginable political grievance what ever it is, real or imagined, can justify this kind of behaviour. And it does represent an attack on all of us and it does represent an attack on the civilised world. ... I think now is the time for the civilised world to work out the most effective way, not talk about it, not telegraph it but work out and implement the most effective way of responding. We can use words, in the end it's deeds that really count and we've seen that to horrible effect...<sup>11</sup>

For Alexander Downer, Australia's response rested on the following premise:

We help the United States because it's in Australia's national interest that the war against terrorism should be successful....it is not in our interest to have the civilisation that we belong to be attacked in the way it was attacked on September the eleventh.<sup>12</sup>

According to the foreign minister, the threat posed by Islamic terrorism, required Australia signing up to a mission to save the future of the world:

The threat of international terrorism hangs over each of our nations, it is only right that the risk and the cost for its eradication should be shared. ...The stakes are very high, even determining the security of the world that we hand to our children and grandchildren. In both our contribution to the international coalition, and in the example shown by our whole society, Australia will be seen to have played its part.<sup>13</sup>

However, the Prime Minister took the trouble to make the point that the 'war on terror' should not be misconstrued as a war against Islam itself or against Australia's Muslim neighbours. Reassuring Australia's

. . . neighbours that the hatreds embodied by September 11 can only destroy what we humans value most I would say again to Australians of Islamic faith and Arab decent that you are just as much a part of our society as anyone else and deserve the respect and the tolerance and the friendship owed to all Australians.<sup>14</sup>

According to the Prime Minister this was an unconventional war with a new type of enemy. The 'war'

...will be prolonged and against an enemy hiding in the dark corners of the world. An enemy who will falsely portray our objective to destroy terrorism as an assault upon Islam. The war will be a new kind of war. There will be few, if any, set-piece battles to bring it to an end. Rather it will be a sustained effort, requiring sturdy patience, and the careful marshalling and coordination of resources (emphasis is mine).<sup>15</sup>

However, he was in no doubt as to who would emerge as victorious in this struggle:

There is no doubt that the coalition forces will win, but it would be irresponsible to predict when we will win. To ask the question of when it will end is to betray a misunderstanding of the nature of the enemy. The challenge to our civilised way of life will not be resolved quickly, but it will ultimately be resolved...My experience in politics has always been that you need a (sic) continually advocate your cause, continue to argue your case, continue to repel your critics and continue to strike down their false arguments and their false nations...<sup>16</sup>

Islamist-inspired terrorism, according to Downer,

threatens moderate Islam and moderate Muslims as much as it does the West... [and that] ...terrorism, rather than promoting conflict between Islam and the West, is in some instances actually encouraging cooperation.<sup>17</sup>

The conclusion that can be drawn from these quotes is that they exemplify the profound impact that September 11 has had on the Howard government's world view; their deep-held conviction of the moral sanctity of the war against terror which would underline all subsequent internal and external policies and pronouncements.

# 2

## Immigration, Refugees and Perceptions of National Security

Historically, immigration and population have been linked to Australia's anxieties about national security. In the aftermath of the Second World War immigration became strongly coupled with the nation-building project, reflected in the popular catch-cry 'populate or perish'. After 1947, successive waves of European migrants, many of whom were Commonwealth-assisted, including hundreds of thousands of refugees – and, for the first time, large numbers of Jewish people – arrived on Australian shores, a process that has dramatically altered the shape of Australian society.

The logic of 'defensive immigration' ended with the dismantling of the White Australia Policy in the 1960s and the emergence of multiculturalism in the 1970s. As a consequence, from the 1970s to the 1990s, immigration and national security were more or less decoupled, and Australia's refugee and migrant intake was structured according to new principles, typically economic and humanitarian. However, the Australian government's response to the sharp increase in the number of unauthorised boat arrivals – largely from conflict areas in the Middle East – in the late 1990s and early 2000s, suggests that immigration and national security had once again become firmly fused in Australia's political consciousness.

Moreover, the issue of Middle Eastern asylum-seekers became radically politicised in the period following the terror attacks on the United States in September 2001,

and the subsequent US-led military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq, to which Australia was keenly committed.

As the Coalition government's political fortunes waned in early 2001, the issue of Middle Eastern 'boat people' simmered, with intermittent media reports of well-off refugees paying people smugglers to come to Australia. In August 2001 the issue exploded following the international incident aboard the *MV Tampa*, a Norwegian cargo vessel, in the waters to Australia's north, which had rescued 438 Afghani asylum seekers from their sinking boat. On 26 August 2001 the government argued that Australia was under no obligation to receive the stranded vessel and refused entry to Australian territorial waters. Sensing an opportunity to play to its political strengths in the electorate, the government was quick to use the idea that the refugees were engaged in stand-over tactics. Howard declared:

[W]e cannot allow situations to be created where we run the risk of losing control of our borders and losing control of our undoubted, or the implementation of our undoubted right to control who comes to this country..<sup>18</sup>

Amidst the heightened sense of vulnerability and insecurity following the September 11 terror attacks, the *Tampa* incident, and the subsequent 'children overboard' affairs, which broke just after the announcement of the 2001 federal election campaign, provided the catalyst for the adoption of the strictest border protection regime in Australian peacetime history. The government dispatched military equipment and personnel to the north, with a 'ring of steel' to 'protect' Australia from boat people arriving in small, often barely sea-worthy fishing vessels.

Indeed, the government's success at the 2001 election has been largely attributed to the conflation of immigration and national security issues after nearly three decades in which these issues had been more or less decoupled.<sup>19</sup> This break with the recent past was not without its critics. Commenting on the Coalition's campaign strategy, Tony Walker of the *Financial Review* characterised it as a 'blatant attempt to push hot-button

community concerns: refugees, drugs, security'.<sup>20</sup> This reading of the situation was echoed by the *Sydney Morning Herald* which described the linking of defence and immigration as 'nakedly opportunistic'.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, former Labor Prime Minister Paul Keating declared that the 2001 'election was won on appeal to racism'.<sup>22</sup> This view was also shared by former Liberal Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser: who 'never thought (he'll) see the day when discrimination and race would play such a large part in an election'.<sup>23</sup> Finally, former Liberal leader, John Hewson, declared that 2001 elections was 'a victory of prejudice over policy'.<sup>24</sup>

All this having been said, the fact remains that the federal government's attitudes and perceptions mirrored and resonated with a significant cross-section of the Australian community. What these difficult events demonstrated is that much of Australian society is still uneasy about the deeper implications of multiculturalism.

# 3 The Usage of Language

*...in war, truth is the first casualty*  
Aeschylus (525 BC - 456 BC)

It is not possible to properly understand Australian politics over the past decade without reference to the use of *political language*. In particular, the emergence of dual coded political language (sometimes referred to as 'dog-whistle' politics), which can be understood as rhetorical devices which appear to have one general meaning whilst simultaneously containing a different 'subliminal' message targeting a specific subgroup.

A key element of the Liberal-National Coalition's 1996 victory was Howard's ability to speak to the grievances of a particular domestic political constituency in Australia: the disaffected population of typically white, Anglo-Saxon blue collar communities, many of whom consider themselves to be victims of the unprecedented economic, social, political and cultural transformations during the last three decades. The Liberal and National parties campaigned successfully by more or less presenting themselves as the voice of the commonly held views amongst these communities that traditional Australian values and culture had come under attack from cosmopolitan, 'politically correct' elites determined to favour immigrants and Indigenous Australians and remake Australia as an 'Asian nation'.

Nevertheless, even a liberal government led by a conservative prime minister was unable to entirely capture this constituency and its electoral influence was demonstrated most dramatically with the rise of the rightwing populist One Nation party, led by Pauline Hanson, in 1997. Hanson and One Nation spoke more directly and clearly, albeit in highly simplistic and

provocative terms, to the traditional farming and blue collar communities of Australia, acting as a vehicle for the expression of their anxieties about race and immigration, globalisation and the 'hollowing out' of Australian manufacturing, and rapid social and cultural change in general. Initially, One Nation was extraordinarily successful electorally, particularly in the 1998 Queensland state (23%) and national elections (8%), but by 1999 the party's fortunes were in serious decline.

Even though by early 2000 One Nation had entirely collapsed as a political force, it revealed that on social and cultural issues Australia was a deeply divided and polarised society. The demise of One Nation did not signify the eradication of its core constituency. It was absorbed, in large part, into the government's constituency – known as the 'Howard battlers'. To recapture and hold on to this constituency, the Liberal government, led by its Prime Minister, pursued a firmer conservative posture. As an editorial in the *Age* newspaper explained: 'by co-opting some of her less savoury ideas by stealth, the Prime Minister helped to neutralise One Nation as a political force.'<sup>25</sup> A critical element of this dynamic had been the use of subtly-coded language by the Prime Minister and other members of the government on issues of concern to the 'battler' constituency. Within what are typically inoffensive statements or assertions – meant for the general Australian audience – a second layer of meaning can often be inferred, one that speaks, however subtly, to the typically marginalised and disaffected.

In the context of a moral panic over Islam in Australian society since 2001, questions of Arab and Muslim identity and culture feature heavily whenever politicians or journalists bring out the dog-whistle. The reporting of the Sydney gang-rapes, and the subsequent trials of the Lebanese-Australian youths charged with them, is a case in point. Intercultural tensions between the Lebanese and Anglo-Saxon communities of Sydney surfaced again in 2005, with the racially charged riots in Cronulla and surrounding suburbs in Sydney's beach suburbs. On 11 December 2005, approximately 5000 people gathered in

an ad-hoc protest to 'reclaim the beach' after recently-reported incidents of assaults and intimidating behaviour by groups of non-locals, most of whom were identified in earlier media reports as Middle Eastern, particularly Lebanese-Australian, youths from the suburbs of Western Sydney. The crowd had assembled following a widely-reported series of earlier confrontations, and an assault on three volunteer (lifeguards) which had taken place the previous weekend.

While most media and political commentators interpreted the violence as racially charged and suggestive of a strongly anti-immigrant and xenophobic strain in many sections of Australian society, John Howard was at pains to play down the existence of racism in Australia and to expose the deep hatreds fuelling the riots. Furthermore, the Prime Minister employed coded-language on a number of occasions following the riots, condemning the loutish behaviour of the white Australian rioters in a reasonable manner while failing to denounce the racist content of their motivations, actions and language.<sup>26</sup>

This was also evident during the Prime Minister's 2006 Australia Day address when, speaking to the broader Australian public, he said:

Within limits, all Australians have the right to participate freely in our national life ... [to be] coupled with an absolute determination that all sections of the Australian community are fully integrated into the mainstream of our national life.

Whilst focusing to a narrower constituency he spoke of the importance of re-affirming Australia's Judeo-Christian and British cultural core and of not being 'too obsessed with diversity'.<sup>27</sup> Paradoxically, this message also resonated with many non-Anglo ethnic communities who, for different reasons, were themselves highly critical of the Muslim community.

Within the context of simmering leadership tension, the treasurer and deputy leader of the Liberal Party, Peter Costello, in an attempt to burnish his leadership credentials beyond his economic portfolio, waded into the multiculturalism debate. Soon after the Prime Minister's

Australia Day comments, and in the wake of the Danish cartoons controversy, Peter Costello hit the headlines with the statement: 'subscribe to Australian values or don't bother coming here.'<sup>28</sup> In his February 2006 speech to the Sydney Institute, he couched his demands in general terms for 'all those who call themselves Australians to subscribe [to Australian values]', but then turned his focus to 'terrorists', Muslims and 'confused, mushy, misguided multiculturalism'.<sup>29</sup>

We now turn our attention to the way language has been used by the government during the 'war on terror' with particular focus on the relationship between the West and Islam. For this purpose we identified key terms pertaining to the 'war on terror' throughout the speeches and statements of relevant government ministers and assess their impact on the broader West and Islam discourse.

Terrorism was the common thread that permeated through the Prime Minister's speeches occurring 762 times between September 2001 and April 2006. Initially the Prime Minister avoided the use of the term the 'war on terror'. Instead he used derivatives such as 'campaign against terror' and the 'war against terror'. The term 'war on terror' entered the Prime Minister's lexicon on the eve of the US-led Iraq offensive (18 March 2003), in the context of linking 'weapons of mass destruction' (WMD) with 'international terrorism'.

Throughout the foreign minister's language a clear distinction is made between the West and moderate Islam as constituting civilisation and terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and extremism as their irreconcilable enemies. The division between extreme and moderate Islam is bridged when the minister referred to a 'Muslim' or 'Islamic' 'system of government' in reference to the Iranian or Taliban regimes. The foreign minister's discourse differed slightly from that of the Prime Minister's in that he linked terrorism and WMD much earlier: from 3 February 2002 onwards, WMD was frequently accompanied with a discourse on terrorism and radical Islam.

# 4

## ‘War on Terror’: The External Dimension

The Coalition government came to office in 1996 following a period of unprecedented transformation in the global strategic environment, but was nevertheless resolutely determined to re-establish the pattern of deep defence and security relations between Canberra and Washington DC. The end of the bi-polar order had given rise to a much more independent Australian foreign policy framework and a more fluid relationship with the United States, which had been the principal element in Australian defence and security strategy during the Cold War. Under the Keating government, Australian foreign policy assumed a much clearer regional focus, reflecting the government’s assessment that Australia’s security interests lay in the development of a ‘cooperative security’ framework in the region.<sup>30</sup> In an historic speech in March 2004, Keating gave voice to this new dispensation when he declared: ‘No country is more important to Australia than Indonesia.’<sup>31</sup> Highly critical while in opposition of what it called Keating’s ‘Asia-only’ policy, the Coalition campaigned in the 1996 election with a strong policy commitment to reinstate the United States as Australia’s dominant defence and security partner and the substantial ‘upgrading of the US-Australian alliance’.<sup>32</sup>

Shortly after assuming office, a crisis in the Taiwan Strait offered the government the opportunity to give expression to its strong commitment to the US alliance. It wasted no time, rehearsing its alliance credentials with vehement diplomatic and political support for the heightened US naval presence in the East China Sea, a decision that exposed sharp differences between Australia and its

neighbours and which the government was later to deeply regret.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, following a request from Washington DC in February 1998, the Howard government immediately agreed to participate in an international coalition for proposed military action against Iraq.<sup>34</sup> However the initiative stalled in the UN Security Council and the United States and Britain proceeded with punitive air strikes against Baghdad without Australian involvement later that year.

Nevertheless, in the fluid strategic environment of the post-Cold War era, the Clinton administration remained deeply ambivalent towards the Howard government's vision of the alliance.<sup>35</sup> Attempts by the government to draw the US into deeper security cooperation were repeatedly rebuffed, notably when the Clinton administration declined to commit ground forces to the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) mission in East Timor in 1999. George W. Bush's assumption of the presidency in 2001, presented the Howard government with the prospect of a more enthusiastic partner in its alliance vision, based on a shared perspective on the projection of American power abroad and the overriding importance of the national interest in the pursuit of foreign policy, and a common scepticism of the efficacy of multilateral institutions in international affairs. The Howard government's view that foreign policy ought to reflect 'the hard-headed pursuit of ... interests' over the development of 'grand constructs',<sup>36</sup> outlined in its 1997 foreign policy white paper, *In the National Interest*, bears a striking resemblance to the perspectives presented in Condoleezza Rice's widely read article establishing the basis for American foreign policy under a Bush administration, 'Campaign 2000: Promoting the National Interest', published in early 2000.<sup>37</sup>

September 11 established the basis for a realisation of the Howard government's longstanding alliance aspirations; since then, official US-Australian relations have been as close as at any time since the Second World War. The Australian response was profoundly influenced by John Howard's presence in the United States at the time of the attacks. As Paul Kelly has noted, 'Howard was in the

shadow of the terror and he felt it.<sup>38</sup> The day after the attacks, while still in Washington, the Prime Minister's rhetoric was understandably emotional: 'I just can't overstate the sympathy, the solidarity, the empathy I feel for the American nation and the American people at the present time.' In addition, he established a cultural and political distinction that became a template for all future responses to terror attacks against western targets:

Of course, it's an attack on all of us. And no imaginable political grievance what ever it is, real or imagined, can justify this kind this kind of behaviour. And it does represent an attack on all of us and it does represent an attack on the civilised world.<sup>39</sup>

The Australian government's political response was unequivocal. The government readily adopted the metaphor of war chosen by the Bush administration to frame its response to the September 11 attacks, and committed Australia to military action even before such assurances had been formally sought by the Americans. Following the lead of the NATO powers, on 14 September the Prime Minister announced the government's decision to invoke the provisions of the ANZUS Treaty under Article iv.<sup>40</sup>

Australia made a sizeable contribution to the United States' 'Operation Enduring Freedom' against the Taliban regime in October 2001, and the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan. The Australian contingent numbered some 1500 personnel, including 150 SAS soldiers. While initial military operations were generally regarded as successful, the United States came under fire towards the end of 2001 as credible reports of between 1000 and 1300 civilian casualties in the bombing of Afghanistan emerged.<sup>41</sup> This was not entirely unexpected. In a media interview on 14 October 2001, Australia's foreign minister Alexander Downer strongly emphasised the desire to minimise civilian casualties but warned that some innocent deaths were probably inevitable.<sup>42</sup> When pressed on the issue, Howard and Downer were quick to point out the many thousands of civilians killed in the September 11 attacks.<sup>43</sup>

On 12 October 2002, 202 people – including 88 Australians – were killed and a further 209 injured when the militant Indonesian Islamist organisation Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) operatives exploded a series of truck-bombs in the resort town of Kuta on the Indonesian island of Bali. Bali became Australia's September 11 and the ensuing response established a 'second front' for the 'war on terror' in Southeast Asia. At this juncture Australia found itself oscillating between an overt war framework and a law-enforcement and criminal justice approach, with the Prime Minister ruling in pre-emptive strikes in Southeast Asia but also emphasising police and intelligence angles.

Indeed, since Bali Southeast Asia and Indonesia, in particular, became the focus of government interest in the 'war on terror'. The bombings of the Marriott Hotel (5 August 2003) and outside the Australian embassy (9 September 2004) in Jakarta confirmed this trend. Again in 2005, with the second Bali attacks in Kuta and Jimbaran beach, the Southeast Asia link had been strong. Southeast Asia has been the primary lens through which the Australian government has focused its institutional and political efforts in the 'war on terror'. The personalities of Southeast Asian terror have been the focus of the government's attention. The government sought to make much of the capture of Riduan Isamuddin (Hambali) on 11 August 2003 and the killing of Azahari bin Husin on 9 November 2005.

When terror attacks occurred outside Australia's region, particularly the Madrid train bombing (March 2004) and the London bombings in July 2005, the government's response had been largely rhetorical, following the same template. It expressed solidarity with the community, in which the attacks occurred, emphasising the uncivilised nature of the militants and establishing the key elements of its linkages to Iraq and Al Qaeda.

Australia has also been very receptive to the Israeli line on the question of Lebanon and Hezbollah recently. The Prime Minister has flatly refused to unlist the armed wing of Hezbollah as a prescribed terrorist organisation despite

appeals by the government's Muslim Community Reference Group (MCRG).<sup>44</sup>

What we can conclude from the above survey is that Australia under the Howard government, has, especially after September 11, tied its foreign, defence and security policy to that of the United States. Australia's involvement in the 'war on terror', irrespective of the merits or otherwise of the case, was motivated primarily and exclusively by its alliance with the United States.

# 5 War on Terror: the Domestic Front

Nowhere is the link between the 'war on terror' and its domestic implication more astutely illustrated than in the Prime Minister's appearance on a TV breakfast show a month after September 11. Quizzed about whether there was a 'local focus' of 'up to 100 Sydney residents' having 'links with terrorist organisations associated with Osama bin Laden', the Prime Minister warned that:

... people should not imagine that there aren't sympathisers to people like bin Laden in Australia and nobody should imagine that this country is immune either now or in the future from some kind of terrorist attack....<sup>45</sup>

Internalisation of the 'war on terror' saw the government set out to convince Australian public opinion of the need for far-reaching anti-terrorist legislation. Prior to 2002, Australia lacked a dedicated legislative anti-terrorism regime. While existing commonwealth and state legislation contained a number of provisions relating to terrorism, only the Northern Territory had an offence of committing a terrorist attack.<sup>46</sup> Over the past six years, Australian governments have moved to establish a comprehensive anti-terrorism framework, which has expanded incrementally during this time, typically with increased strengthening in the wake of 'peak' terrorist events around the globe.

Following September 11, the Australian government moved quickly to review existing anti-terrorism measures and to strengthen Australia's counter-terrorism capabilities. On 6 October 2001, the commonwealth implemented the provisions of the UN's Security Council

Resolution 1378, calling on member states to introduce specific anti-terrorism legislation.

In mid-December 2001, the federal cabinet endorsed a range of measures to strengthen the commonwealth's anti-terrorism legislative regime and to expand domestic intelligence-gathering and surveillance mechanisms, with particular emphasis on a much-enhanced role for the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO). Almost immediately, fears of an excessive response by the government to September 11 prompted some journalists and a range of civil libertarians to warn of the potential threat to individual rights and freedoms arising from the proposals to dramatically expand ASIO's powers of arrest and detention. In view of the fact that ASIO was not subject to the checks and balances that hold state and federal police accountable, concerns were raised that the organisation could become a 'secret police'.<sup>47</sup>

The commonwealth sought co-operation from the states and territories to coordinate those aspects of counter-terrorism subject to their jurisdiction, particularly surveillance and arrest. On 5 April 2002, the Prime Minister met with state and territory leaders and agreed to work together to establish a national legislative and inter-agency framework to combat terrorism. Nevertheless, the principal focus remained with the commonwealth and in mid-2002, the federal government unveiled its proposed new anti-terrorism regime, tabling a package of five bills containing a raft of new statutory terrorism offences and mechanisms to combat terrorist financing. The bulk of this package was passed by the federal parliament in early July 2002. However, the issue of civil liberties presented a critical stumbling block for the government and the government was forced to postpone its ASIO legislation after an all-party parliamentary committee ruled that the proposed length of detention without charge and the provisions for the detention and strip searching of children were unacceptable.<sup>48</sup>

The Bali bombings of October 2002 radically shifted Australia's perception of the security environment. Amidst a heightened sense of insecurity and vulnerability to

Islamist terror in Australia's region, the federal government moved to further strengthen the anti-terrorism regime it had only recently implemented. The government's focus shifted to the security of Australians abroad, and one month after the Bali attacks the Commonwealth parliament passed legislation making it a criminal offence under Australian law to murder, commit manslaughter or intentionally or recklessly cause serious harm to an Australian outside Australia.

Following the Bali attacks the Australian government listed JI as a proscribed terrorist organisation under the new anti-terrorism legislation.<sup>49</sup> Following revelations that JI leader Abu Bakar Bashir had visited Australia on at least 12 occasions since 1992, the Australian government's counter-terrorism efforts shifted to uncovering any possible JI operatives or associates living in Australia. In late October 2002, ASIO launched a series of dramatic early-morning raids in Melbourne and Sydney on the homes of suspected JI sympathisers, all of whom were Muslim Indonesian-Australians. Amidst widespread concern expressed in the media that Australia's Muslim community was being victimised and potentially alienated by the dramatic and intimidating nature of the raids,<sup>50</sup> and concerns raised by the Indonesian government regarding police heavy-handedness, the Prime Minister asserted that the raids were:

. . . not targeting Muslims. That is ridiculous. These raids relate to investigations concerning individuals. People who claim that this is in some way targeting Islamic sections of Australia are just, in my opinion, deliberately trying to create a difficulty that does not and ought not to exist. We have no argument with decent law-abiding Islamic Australians.<sup>51</sup>

In 2003, the focus in Australia shifted squarely to the threat of domestic terrorism and, in particular, the intense debate over the federal government's highly contentious ASIO legislation, which had been delayed repeatedly due to ongoing concerns about civil liberties. While the Greens and the Democrats opposed the legislation outright, an agreement between the government and the Labor opposition secured the legislation's passage through the parliament on 26 June 2003 – fourteen months after its

introduction.<sup>52</sup> Later in 2003, the government was severely embarrassed by revelations that Willie Virgile Brigitte, a French terrorist suspect with links to al-Qaeda, had been allowed to enter Australia under a tourist visa issued by the Australian embassy in Paris. In the wake of his deportation to France in mid-October, ASIO's behaviour yet again came under intense criticism when raids on six of Brigitte's associates became the subject of a complaint to the Inspector-General of Intelligence, Australia's security watchdog.<sup>53</sup>

In late 2003 and into 2004, the Australian government again sought to tighten the domestic anti-terror regime, with a particular focus on transport security. The *Maritime Transport and Offshore Facilities Security Act (2003)*, passed two days before Christmas 2003 and the *Aviation Transport Security Amendment Act (2004)*, passed on 10 March 2004 were the central focus of this effort. The Madrid train bombing by al-Qaeda on 11 March 2004, dramatically heightened transport security fears and appeared to vindicate the government's attention to Australian infrastructure security. With a renewed sense of vulnerability to the possibility of a terror attack on Australian soil, the Prime Minister mooted a further expansion of ASIO powers and new and severe limits on the civil liberties of those charged with terrorism offences, including the extraordinary provision making it a criminal offence for those convicted of terrorist offences to profit from media interviews or selling books and memoirs, and moves to remove the presumption of bail for those charged under terrorist offences.<sup>54</sup> Three anti-terrorism bills, passed between June and August 2004, largely gave effect to these proposals.

Following its re-election, the government sought to take advantage of its pending control of the Senate to re-introduce legislation to limit national security-related information from entering the public domain and restrict the use, communication and publication of information obtained through the use of surveillance devices. However, the *National Security Information (Criminal and Civil Proceedings) Act 2004*, designed to protect information from disclosure in federal criminal

proceedings where the disclosure would be likely to prejudice Australia's national security, was amended considerably following strong lobbying from the Australian Press Council and the Fairfax Media organisation.<sup>55</sup>

The London bombings on 7 July 2005 dramatically altered the security landscape yet again, and set the stage for an unprecedented toughening of Australia's counter-terrorism regime. Taking its lead directly from the United Kingdom, on 8 September 2005 the government announced a range of proposed changes to Australian anti-terror laws, much of which was based on British legislation.<sup>56</sup> These measures – including control orders, preventative detention and electronic tracking of terror suspects not yet charged or tried for offences – as well as new sedition provisions designed to prohibit 'inciting' terrorist acts against Australia or Australians – were all highly controversial, and were the subject of dire warnings from civil libertarians and the media.<sup>57</sup>

The government introduced the *Anti-Terrorism Act (2005)* on 14 October 2005, following agreement with the states and territories over the proposals at a COAG (Council of Australian Governments) meeting on 27 September. Nevertheless, opposition to the legislation was strong and the government faced a barrage of criticism from civil libertarians, the opposition and minor parties, state and territory governments (the legislation had been significantly amended from what had been agreed at COAG), and indeed from a small number of Liberal parliamentarians, the most vocal being Victorian backbencher Petro Georgiou.<sup>58</sup> In late October 2005, the president of Australia's Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (HREOC) announced that the legislation would need to be reconsidered as it failed to adequately protect suspects under preventative detention.<sup>59</sup>

Eager to implement as much of its agenda as possible, but under significant pressure from coalition backbenchers, the government extracted elements of the original legislation and re-introduced them as a separate, much

smaller bill, on 2 November 2005. The Prime Minister declared that:

The Government has received specific intelligence and police information this week which gives cause for serious concern about a potential terrorist threat ... The Government is satisfied on the advice provided to it that the immediate passage of [the extracted elements] would strengthen the capacity of law enforcement agencies to effectively respond to this threat ... [T]hese specific elements have taken on a greater degree of urgency and on that basis the Government intends to secure their passage immediately.<sup>60</sup>

The smaller *Anti-Terrorism (No. 1) Act (2005)* was passed on 4 November amidst controversy that the federal government's dramatic announcement of this 'specific intelligence' – and the strong warning of a terrorist threat associated with it – in the same week as it introduced the smaller bill was a political conspiracy to hasten passage of the legislation.<sup>61</sup> The government's original, much more comprehensive, legislation was then referred to a Senate committee for inquiry. Despite its Senate majority, the government faced difficulty moving the legislation through, and was forced by coalition senators to make significant amendments to the proposed sedition provisions, which were deemed too broad.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, the amended legislation was passed as the *Anti-Terrorism (No.2) Act (2005)* on 14 December 2005.

# 6 ‘Good’ Muslims and ‘Bad’ Muslims: ‘Moderates’ and ‘Fundamentalists’

In the wake of the London terrorist attacks, the Australian government, concerned about the prospect of home grown terrorism, embarked on a consultation process with moderate leaders of Australia’s Muslim community. Emulating the UK government’s ‘Preventing Extremism Together’ (PET) initiative, it sought to develop a strategy aimed at curtailing extremism amongst the Muslim community.

On the 23 August 2005 the Prime Minister met with representatives of the Muslim community and agreed on a statement of principles. The statement declared ‘overriding loyalty to Australia’, ‘its traditions, values and institutions’, denounced terrorism, and committed the signatories to ‘protect Australia against violence, terrorism and intolerance’. The statement also declared that:

Members of the Muslim faith, and in particular its leaders, have a responsibility to challenge and counteract those who seek to encourage the use of violence and terrorism in the name of Islam.

Finally, the statement committed those present to ‘take a lead with their communities and other Islamic organisations to promote harmony, mutual understanding and Australian values . . . and to challenge violence and extremism’.<sup>63</sup> At the joint press conference with the president of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC), Ameer Ali, the Prime Minister reiterated his intention of embarking on an ‘ongoing dialogue and contact between the Australian Government

and the Islamic Community of Australia' to 'tackle the problem and the potential for difficulty arising from the terrorist threat within our community'.<sup>64</sup> This led to the establishment (September 2005) of the MCRG and its sub-groups<sup>65</sup> which concluded its tenure with the report, 'Building on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security: An Action Plan by the Muslim Community Reference Group'.<sup>66</sup>

Although the initiative was warmly welcomed by the great majority of Islamic organisations in Australia, there was disquiet and questioning of whether the process should have included Muslim leaders with harder political dispositions. However, this proposition was ruled out by the government's attitude that such outspoken figures not be granted the credibility, and therefore legitimacy, by participating in a government committee.

External events also began to impinge on the workings of the MCRG and its sub-groups. Inevitably tension with members of the group began to flare up especially at times of heightened international crises. The government's policies, especially pertaining to the Middle East, impacted on the cohesiveness of the group and eventually affected its relationship with the government. Nowhere was this more evident than during the 2006 Israel-Lebanon war.<sup>67</sup>

In ascertaining the government's rationale for embarking on, the MCRG initiative, a three-prong strategy emerges: (1) to consolidate its anti-terrorist legislation and more widely its foreign and national security policies, including its counter terrorism programme, by securing at least the tacit support of the Muslim 'community'; (2) to deflect 'ownership' and therefore responsibility for home-grown extremism on to the Muslim community. However well intentioned or politically expedient these objectives may be, the net effect has been to divide Muslims into two groups: the 'moderates' and the 'extremists'; whilst further sharpening the 'us' (Australian) and 'them' (Muslims) dichotomy. Here, Muslims are identified not only as the 'other' but their separateness is accentuated by the fact that 'we' enter into a dialogue with 'them' as a distinct entity; (3) to send a message to mainstream (non-Muslim) Australia that the government is pro-active when dealing with potential home-grown Muslim extremism.

# Conclusion

Having surveyed the government's handling of tensions between the Muslim world and the West, we are increasingly conscious of the wider pressures that foreign and security policy making can exert on the fabric of Australian society. It is the recognition of these deeper and longer term implications that suggests the need for a much better understanding of the complex relationship between foreign and domestic policy, indeed between all areas of policy. Dealing with Australia's cultural diversity requires a 'whole-of-government' and a 'whole-of-society' approach. The findings and recommendations that follow seek to flesh out this key issue for Australia's future.

# Key Findings

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## *Foreign and National Security Policy*

- In an age of rapid globalisation where the delineation between domestic and external policy has become more and more blurred, governments are confronted with the perennial dilemma of reconciling national interest and the demands of social policy. Increasingly governments are discovering the difficulties of handling the social implications of foreign policy making with its multiple linkages to Australia's domestic situation.
- The government's overall foreign and security policies following September 11, especially but not exclusively, in relation to the Muslim world, and its participation in the 'war on terror', have become a source of concern and apprehension, even discontent, amongst many Australian-Muslims.
- There is a growing sentiment across a significant section of the Australian community, as reflected in several opinion surveys,<sup>68</sup> that Australia's foreign, defence and national security policies may have become too closely aligned with those of the United States, and that in the process Australia may have alienated itself from its Muslim neighbours, Indonesia and Malaysia, several member-states of the European Union and the majority view in the UN system.

## *Australia's General Community*

- In responding to the terrorist threat emanating from September 11, government pronouncements may have helped to create, no doubt unintentionally, a climate of insecurity, suspicion and xenophobia amongst some sections of Australian society (sometimes referred to as 'islamophobia').
- Internalisation of the 'war on terror' has contributed to a negative perception of Muslims and Islam, whose image

has been tarnished by the vague use of such labels as 'terrorism', 'fanaticism', 'fundamentalism' and 'extremism'.

- The elusiveness of identifying an 'enemy' in the 'war on terror' has made locating and identifying the enemy especially difficult. The result has often been that, despite public assurances to the contrary, a widespread perception has been created that the 'enemy' is the 'other', and that this 'other' is Muslim.

### *Australia's Muslim Community*

- The government's failure to explain at all adequately to the Muslim communities the logic of its policies on the Iraq war, the Palestinian issue, Lebanon and other sensitive issues of deep concern to Muslims may have compounded the problem.
- September 11 and the attention thrust upon Islam and Muslims in Australia have had two opposing effects: on the one hand, they have forced Muslim-Australians to organise themselves and engage with other faiths and the non-Muslim community at large; on the other hand, they have deepened their sense of insecurity, and in the case of some produced a virtual siege mentality, especially amongst sections of the young and socio-economically underprivileged.
- The increasingly negative depiction of Muslims is resonating with young Muslims – this taken in conjunction with other identity-related factors constitutes a recipe for radicalisation around a seemingly religious cause.
- The government's intervention to superimpose a centralised structure on the Muslim communities has created a number of social and psychological conditions with medium and long-term consequences.
- One such consequence has been to sharpen the division between 'moderate' ('liberal' or 'progressive') Muslims and those with harder political dispositions ('fundamentalists')

or 'extremists') along an artificially constructed continuum – a policy which is beginning to cause avoidable social tensions.

- Unless care is taken, a point may soon be reached where open conflict develops between Muslims and other sections of the community. We are seeing the beginnings of a potentially conflictual relationship, which may in time give way to rising tension and ultimately confrontation. Deployment of cross-cultural training, monitoring and dialogical negotiation have not been sufficiently applied, with the result that the conflict may, with relatively little warning or added provocation, cross the threshold from unstable peace to social turmoil.

### *Multiculturalism*

- In a broader context 'Islam' has been used as a metaphor for multiculturalism in the current debate over cultural values, leading to added confusion as to the meaning of multiculturalism, and unnecessary division as to how Australia should handle its religious and cultural diversity.
- In the last ten years the Australian society and polity have undergone a subtle but important re-alignment of relations with the outside world and with our region. A certain introversion has set in, perhaps in response to the policies of an earlier period, beginning with the Gorton and later Whitlam governments. This trend was generally reinforced during the Fraser years and the life of subsequent Labor governments. September 11, the 'war on terror' and Australian's closer identification with the Anglo-West, have strengthened attitudes and perceptions reminiscent of an earlier period, including suspicion of outsiders, fear of 'enemies' within and without, and a certain unease in dealing with cultural and religious diversity in our midst. This shift in the political climate has been reflected in a willingness to pursue stringent security laws and measures that have implications for long established civil liberties.

## *Language*

- When a Prime Minister, other government ministers, or senior public official speak, the language they deploy resonates with a wide cross-section of Australian society. Use of language especially by figures in positions of authority has long-term psychological ramifications and inevitably helps to shape the tenor of political discourse.
- Shaping policies and using rhetoric primarily with a view to securing short-term electoral advantage carries serious dangers when it comes to handling the sensitive area of cultural and religious diversity, especially in the highly volatile post-September 11 climate. The frequent repetition of messages that are open to conflicting interpretations – something which media coverage will often amplify and sensationalise – can reinforce attitudes of mistrust and alienation, and lead in certain circumstances to socially damaging behaviour. All those who hold public office, and this applies to all political parties, must pay particular attention to this aspect of public discourse.

# Key Recommendations

1. Increasingly foreign policy formation needs a whole-community approach that straddles many areas of policy including immigration, civil law, human rights, trade, education, defence, community relations, tourism, health, and the environment. This requires a deeper and wider appreciation of the linkages between different issues and problems across a broad spectrum of policy issues.
2. There is clear need for governments at all levels – federal, state and even local – and parties of all political complexions, to engage and consult with the Muslim communities in a sustained dialogue and not as a one-off event. This dialogue should involve Muslims as well as non-Muslims from academia, religious community organisations, non-government organisations, the media, the business sector, and the union movement. Consultation over the subject of developing mechanisms, processes and structures of consultation should itself involve both Muslims and non-Muslims.
3. Government at all levels should take the lead in portraying Islam and other ethno-religious communities in Australia as social assets and not as liabilities. This approach would aim to: a) utilise and harness the relatively untapped resources, knowledge and network for Australia's political, commercial and cultural dealings with the world; b) cement a solid relationship between government and the Muslim community; and c) enhance, in a mutually beneficial and collaborative way, the integration process.
4. If extremism and destructive radicalisation are to be avoided, considerable effort must be taken in the medium to long term to tackle inequality, discrimination, and insensitively expressed policy pronouncements. This requires a thorough examination of the causes and sources of social conflict, establishment of an early

warning system for any potential simmering of social unrest, and the creation of a crisis prevention/management strategy at the grass-roots level, preferably with the full participation of local councils and community organisations.

5. The key recommendations set out in the Muslim Community Reference Group's report, 'Building on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security: An Action Plan by the Muslim Community Reference Group' should be adopted. Particular attention should be paid to the implementation of proposals to establish cross-cultural training of service providers, work with converts of Islam, promote community support for Muslims in regional and remote areas, carefully monitor the use of language by politicians that relate to Islam and Muslims, and educate the media's inadequate understanding of the historical, scientific, artistic, and economic aspects of Islamic civilisation.
6. There is much to be gained from greater consultation with our Muslim neighbours, especially Indonesia and Malaysia, in matters pertaining to the perception of the Muslim world, not just at governmental level but in ways that involve civil society and the business community. Ideas of 'Haddari Islam' ('humanist' or 'civilisational Islam') as advocated by Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, merit closer consideration.
7. The link between external events and their impact on intercommunal and interreligious relations in Australia needs to be thoroughly investigated. This might involve a parliamentary inquiry into how specific external events or foreign policy positions impact on community relations and the fabric of Australian society. Such an inquiry should include a wide-ranging process of community consultation, the calling of submissions, and public hearings.
8. It is strongly recommended that a permanent Muslim advisory council comprised of Muslim and non-Muslim members be established, ensuring that women, young people and older people are adequately represented. Such a council would advise both the Australian government

and the Commonwealth Parliament on Muslim issues, that is, issues that involve the Muslim world and affect Muslim communities in Australia. The council should address a range of policy areas, including foreign affairs, trade, multicultural affairs, immigration and citizenship, education, national security, community services. To enhance its status and provide it with the overall portfolio reach, the council should be attached to the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. It may be useful to have state government input when determining the composition of the advisory council. This may be especially relevant for states with a high Muslim population, in particular New South Wales and Victoria. Similar advisory groups may be established at state and even municipal level.

9. Young Australian Muslims should be actively encouraged to be leaders and active citizens by providing them with highly professional and appealing leadership training programs. In addition to familiarisation with all aspects of Australian cultural, social, economic, legal and political life, these programs could equip young Australian Muslims to play a constructive leadership role within their own community as well as the wider community, helping them to develop their technical, organisational, writing and speaking skills. These programs should be provided by credible, experienced and qualified institutions in partnership with community organisations with funding provided by government and the private sector.
10. Australian Muslim organisations should develop closer relations not only with government agencies but also with political representatives, including local parliamentarians. In the case of state-based organisations, they should establish effective communication with senators representing their state. Equally important are links with non-Muslims community leaders and media organisations. This should include requesting invitations to seminars, community forums, parliamentary reviews, and consultations that provide an *entrée* to key decision makers. Similarly these organisations must routinely extend invitations to members of parliament and senior public servants to their community festivals, religious celebrations and other community events. Muslim

communities should be encouraged and assisted to train and nurture articulate and well informed spokespeople capable of engaging not only with political decision makers but with a range of diverse audiences. Such training should involve collaboration with a range of community associations, media enterprises and government bodies.

11. State and Federal governments should work closely with Muslim communities to design guidelines on appropriate use of language and procedures to be followed in combating Islamophobia especially in times of crises.
12. An Islamic media unit should be established within the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts modelled on the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to encourage a more balanced representation of Islam and Muslims in Australia. (In this regard see the recommendations set out in the Centre for Dialogue's Discussion Paper no.2, by George Myconos, 'Perceptions of Islamic and Middle Eastern People in Australian Media: Scope for Improvement', 2007).
13. A parliamentary review should examine the application of anti-terrorist legislation and related provisions insofar as it impacts on the Muslim communities and on community relations more generally, with substantial input actively sought from all sections of society, not least from the main faith traditions represented in Australia.

## Appendix

### Chronology of Key Events

<i>Date</i>	<i>International Events</i>	<i>Australian Government Response</i>
26/08/2001		Tampa refused entry into Australia
11/09/2001	Terrorist attack on NY and WDC	PM Howard in Washington DC
14/09/2001		Government invokes Article IV of the ANZUS Treaty
21/09/2001		Government supports airline industry against terrorism
28/09/2001		Brisbane CHOGM Meeting postponed
28/09/2001	UN SC Resolution 1373 re. terrorism	
6/10/2001		Australia implements UNSC 1378
12/10/2001		PM address to Australian Defence Association
24/10/2001	US Congress approves anti-terrorism legislation	
25/10/2001		PM announces Australia's participation in the International Coalition against Terrorism
10/11/2001		<u>Howard's Liberal-National coalition wins third term</u>
13/11/2001	Northern Alliance take control of Kabul overthrowing the Taleban	
30/11/2001		Australian Election, Coalition re-elected
14/12/2001		Australia endorses US' withdrawal from the ABM Treaty.
18/12/2001	US declares 11 September a public holiday called Patriot Day.	
11/04/2002	Blast at a synagogue in Tunisia kills 17 people.	
12/10/2002	Bomb explodes in a Bali nightclub killing 202 people The Islamic group Jemaah Isamiah is suspected.	Includes 88 Australians.
23/10/2002	Chechen theatre siege in Moscow	
26/10/2002	UN lists Jemaah Islamiyah as a terrorist organisation.	
8/11/2002		DFAT advisers Australians to defer all travel to Afghanistan
28/11/2002		Canada, Australia, EU close diplomatic missions in the Philippines.
1/12/2002		PM Howard states that Australia would be prepared to launch a pre-emptive strike on another country as a measure of last resort to fight terrorism.
4/12/2002	Mahathir and Indonesian military warn that any pre-emptive strike by Australia would be perceived as an act of war.	
23/01/2003		Australia sends its first batch of an expected 1,500 troops to join the US-British buildup in the Persian Gulf. Prime Minister John Howard farewells HMAS Kanimbla.
28/01/2003		PM John Howard calls on UN Security Council to act against Saddam Hussein.
1/02/2003		Australian Government announces a further deployment to Persian Gulf of fighter and transport aircraft and command centre personnel.
4/02/2003		PM Howard parliamentary statement on Iraq.
5/02/2003	Gallup International survey finds 33% in US support war in Iraq without UN support, whilst 60% in France and 59% Russia oppose any sort of military action.	Senate vote of no-confidence censor's Howard over handling of Iraq crisis.
		Gallup International survey finds 68% of Australians support some type of military action, however only 12 per cent support a strike by the United States and its allies without

16/02/2003	Worldwide demonstrations in more than 300 cities in over 60 countries in protest over war in Iraq.	a UN mandate. Total of 500,000 people demonstrate against war in Iraq.
21/02/2003		The Australian Defence Force says that almost all of Australia's 2,000 troops are in place in the Persian Gulf preparing for a possible war in Iraq.
24/02/2003	US, Britain and Spain propose a UN resolution declaring that Iraq 'has failed to take the final opportunity' to disarm itself of weapons of mass destruction. Germany, France and Russia present a rival initiative saying that "the military option should be the last resort".	Australian Government supports draft resolution, saying that if it was not carried then the credibility of the Security Council would be weakened.
11/03/2003		Indonesia and Australia to bolster efforts on antiterrorism
19/03/2003	Iraq War launched	
9/04/2003	Baghdad falls to US forces	
5/08/2003	Marriot Hotel bombing, Indonesia	
14/08/2003	Iraq truck bomb leaves UN envoy dead	
29/08/2003	Attack on Mosque leaves 100 dead, Iraq	
11/03/2004	Madrid train bombing	
30/04/2004	Iraq Prisoner abuse scandal emerges	
3/09/2004	350 Dead after School siege stormed in Caucasus	
9/09/2003	Bomb explosion outside Australian Embassy, Jakarta	
7/10/2004	terrorists bomb tourist resorts in Egypt	
26/12/2004	Asian Tsunami	
7/07/2005	London Bombings	
22/07/2005	Egypt Hotel bombing	
23/08/2005		PM Howard meets with representatives of the Muslim community Announcement of establishment of Muslim Community Reference Group
10/09/2005		
1/10/2005	20 Dead in Bali bombs	
7/11/2005		17 arrested on terror charges in Sydney
9/11/ 2005	Jordan terror attacks	
3-4/12/2005		National Muslim Youth Summit
6/12/2005		Senate passes anti-terrorist legislation
11/12/2005		Cronulla riots
13/01/2006	US airstrike on al-Zawahiri in Pakistan	
17/05/2006		1 <sup>st</sup> Crisis Management Workshop held in Darwin by AGD
16/06/2006		Australian Government announces \$8 million towards establishing a national centre of excellence for Islamic studies at university level.
12/07/-	Israel-Lebanon War	
08/09/2006		
16-		Conference of Australian Imams in Sydney
17/09/2006		

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## NOTES

1. The term 'terror' means 'fear' and 'horror' in Latin and its origins can be traced as far back as that of human conflict. Defined as a means to spread fear amongst one's enemy by committing vile and morally incomprehensible acts primarily against the vulnerable populous (rape, burn and pillage). The weaker the side is militarily, politically and economically, the more likelihood that it will deploy terrorism. The first use of 'terror' as systematic use of violence to attain political ends ('Reign of Terror') was pursued by Maximilien Robespierre and the Jacobin faction during the French Revolution in the late 18th century. M. Robespierre, 'Principes de morale politique' speech delivered to French National Convention, 5 February 1794, at: <http://membres.lycos.fr/discours/1794.htm> (accessed 04/01/2007).
2. Brian M. Jenkins, 'International Terrorism: Trends and Potentialities', *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 32, no. 1, 1978, pp. 115-123.
3. On 17 December 1980 the Turkish Consul General Sarik Ariyak and his bodyguard Engin Sever were assassinated in Sydney – the Justice Commandos against Armenian Genocide (JCAG) claimed responsibility. Six years later on 23 November a bomb exploded outside the Turkish Consulate General in Melbourne with one fatality – presumed to be the perpetrator. Similarly in 1972 a bomb exploded at the Yugoslav General Trade and Tourist Agency in Sydney with sixteen wounded, whilst in December 1982 the Israeli Consulate-General and the Hakoah Club in Sydney were bombed.
4. The first attack on the World Trade Centre in New York found the Australian prime minister in his hotel room preparing for a press conference. Later, whilst in the middle of a press conference, Howard was informed by his press secretary Tony O'Leary that the second tower and the Pentagon were hit. He then went back to his room and could see the smoke billowing out of the Pentagon – he had been at the Pentagon that afternoon visiting the Defence Secretary. The PM's party then went to the Australian Embassy and was joined by the new American Ambassador to Australia Tom Schieffer. There Howard conducted a news conference and asked the acting prime minister to convene a meeting of the security group. See 'Transcript of the Prime Minister the Hon John Howard MP Interview with Alan Jones, Radio 2UE', 17 September 2001, at: [www.pm.gov.au/news/interviews/2001/interview1243.htm](http://www.pm.gov.au/news/interviews/2001/interview1243.htm) (accessed 11/09/2004).
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6. In his televised address to the nation to mark the fifth anniversary of September 11, US President George Bush declared that '[t]his struggle has been called a clash of civilizations. In truth, it is a struggle for civilization', 'President's Address to the Nation, The White House', 11 September 2006, at: [www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/09/20060911-3.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/09/20060911-3.html) (accessed 14/09/06). This notion was not new but an extension of his original declaration that: 'We [meaning the US] wage a war to save civilization, itself', George W. Bush, 'President Discusses War on Terrorism in Address to the Nation at the World Congress Center in Atlanta, Georgia', 8 November 2001, at: [www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/11/20011108-13.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/11/20011108-13.html) (accessed 15/09/2006).
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8. *Ibid.*
9. 'Australians and New Zealanders: New Yorkers All' (a eulogy by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, The Hon. Alexander Downer at a memorial service for victims of the attacks on the World Trade Centre), September 11, 2001', 28 September 2001, New York City, at: [www.dfat.gov.au/media/speeches/foreign/2001/280901\\_fa\\_wtc\\_memorial.html](http://www.dfat.gov.au/media/speeches/foreign/2001/280901_fa_wtc_memorial.html) (accessed 12/05/2006).
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  56. John Howard, 'Counter-Terrorism Laws Strengthened' (media release), 8 September 2005, at: [www.pm.gov.au/news/media\\_releases/media\\_Release1551.html](http://www.pm.gov.au/news/media_releases/media_Release1551.html) (accessed 26/12/2005). The government's proposed changes were largely modelled on the UK's controversial *Prevention of Terrorism Act* (2005), which introduced preventative detention and control orders, and its proposed Terrorism Bill (2005-06), introduced into the House of Commons on 12 October 2005 and proposed changes to sedition provisions, including prohibition against 'fomenting' terrorism against Britain or allied nations. *The Terrorism Act (2006)* came into effect on 30 March 2006. See United Kingdom, *The Terrorism Bill 2005-06*, House of Commons Library Research Paper 05/66 (20 October 2005), London: House of Commons Library, Home Affairs Section, 2005.
  57. See Australian Lawyers for Human Rights, 'Avalanche of Opposition to Government's New Terror Laws' (media release), 9 September 2005, at: [www.alhr.asn.au/html/main/9september2005ftl1.htm](http://www.alhr.asn.au/html/main/9september2005ftl1.htm) (accessed 26/08/2006), and 'Safeguards Needed For New Terror Laws' (media release)', 26 September 2005, at:

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  63. Department of Immigration and Citizenship (Australia), 'Meeting with Islamic Community Leaders, Statement of Principles, 23 August 2005', at: [www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/a-diverse-australia/communities/muslim-community/MCRG/statement-of-principles.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/a-diverse-australia/communities/muslim-community/MCRG/statement-of-principles.htm) (accessed 11/02/2007).
  64. John Howard, 'Joint Press Conference with Dr Ameer Ali, President, Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, Parliament House, Canberra, 23 August 2005', at: [www.pm.gov.au/media/Interview/2005/Interview1518.cfm](http://www.pm.gov.au/media/Interview/2005/Interview1518.cfm) (accessed 15/10/2006).
  65. The six sub-groups were: Engaging with Youth, Engaging with Women, Education and Training of Clerical and Lay Teachers and Leaders, Issues Related to Schooling, Improving Employment Outcomes and Workplace Issues, Improving Crisis Management, and Family and Community.
  66. Although the report was finalised in September, it was not posted on DIMA's website until the 15th December 2006.
  67. Queried during a doorstep interview about MCRG's chair, Ameer Ali, call for the government to rethink its proscription of Hezbollah, the prime minister angrily responded: 'Rethink our proscription of it, what as a terrorist organisation? No chance. Full stop. No chance at all'. Prime Minister of Australian, John Howard, 'Transcript of the Prime Minister the Hon John Howard MP Doorstop Interview, Brisbane, 2 August 2006', at: [www.pm.gov.au/news/interviews/Interview2056.html](http://www.pm.gov.au/news/interviews/Interview2056.html) (accessed 29/08/2006).
  68. For example the Lowy Institute's 2005 and 2006 polls found that 68% to 69% of Australians believed that Australia took too much notice of the US in its foreign policy (Ivan Cook, *Australians Speak 2005: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy*, Sydney: Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2005, pp. 8-9; and *Australia, Indonesia and the World: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy*, Sydney: Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2006, p. 9). Also an international poll commissioned by the BBC and the *Age* across 25 countries found that 60% of Australians held a negative view of US role in the world, Michael Gordon, 'Global Backlash Against America', *Age*, 23 January 2007, at: [www.theage.com.au/news/world/global-backlash-against-america/2007/01/23/1169330840107.html](http://www.theage.com.au/news/world/global-backlash-against-america/2007/01/23/1169330840107.html) (accessed 1/05/2007). Negative sentiment towards US foreign policy in Australia reached such a point that News Corporation chair Rupert Murdoch admitted at a American Australian Association dinner that he was 'well aware that the Iraq war was ... unpopular among many Australians' and that 'not every Australia [saw] the ... American Administration in a favourable light', Caroline Overington, 'America the Flawed – But Still our Friend', *Australian*, 15 November 2006. For an earlier survey of Australian attitudes towards the US see Murray Goot, 'Public Opinion and the Democratic Deficit: Australia and the War Against Iraq', *Australian Humanities Review*, issue 29, May-June 2003, at: <http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/AHR/archive/Issue-May-2003/goot.html> (accessed 30/04/2007).