

HANSARD PINK

Memo for Senator Lambie

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Christine White
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Parliamentary Recording and Reporting Branch

Senator LAMBIE (Tasmania) (12:57): I rise to speak to the motion before the Senate regarding the deployment of the ADF personnel to overseas conflicts. While I support the Greens motion to have a debate about the current military deployment, I do not support the Green's proposal to change the way the decision-making process is made to send the troops overseas. All I propose to change is the decision makers, who have clearly made the wrong call in sending our troops back overseas again. Some people are having difficulty in grasping this following fact: despite all the terror attacks, despite the fact that our official terrorism alert is high, which means that an attack by an enemy is likely, we are at war.

Firstly, I would like at least the Liberal Party to be big enough to say it as it is: we are at war. Let us just say it. Let us be honest. It is a war that we did not want. It is a war that other people have declared on us because they do not like our freedom, our democracy and our way of life, and they do not like the fact that our women and gay people have the same rights as men. They do not like the fact that we do not worship and pray to the same god that they worship and pray to. Therefore, they want to kill and enslave us.

Secondly, for anybody that does not know, out of all the troops that we have—which is about enough full-time troops to half fill the MCG, and then we have reserves on top of that—if you take everything away, we have about 3,000 combat troops. Three thousand combat troops in the last 12 years have shared this war between them. Some of them have done six to 10 tours. That means they have already spent five or six years in the war zone.

Some of them we are sending back on anti-psychotic drugs.

We are not ready for this war because we stopped spending what we should have spent out of our GDP. That is what the problem is, and we just have not been restocking for years. This is caused by both major sides of politics. And now you are going to send these men and women back into the war zone. Not only that, you still have not returned the 1.5 per cent pay rise that you ripped out of them, that you stole from them. But you can stand in front of their faces and tell them they are going back to war. What sort of men does that make on your cabinet, let alone your PM?

But, for the worst of this, let's go into Veterans' Affairs. Let's go into the theory of 'don't send them to war when you cannot look after them when they return'. Right now you people have put in place a system—

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Williams): Senator Lambie, direct your comments through the chair, please. Continue on.

Senator LAMBIE: Acting Deputy President, the Liberal Party set up a system which is called 'offsetting'. It is under three different acts, so now when these men return you are ripping them off. They are not getting paid out in full for their injuries and they are suffering. You know about this but you still refuse to fix it. You know this offsetting is an issue. Veterans' Affairs is in chaos, but you are prepared to sit there and you are prepared to send these men back into war. Well, you know what? I suggest you go and clean up a little bit, because you are out of order. How easy it is for you people to sit over there and say: 'Guess what, men? You're going back into war.'

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Lambie, please direct your comments through the chair.

Senator LAMBIE: Like I said, that is after you rip 1.5 per cent of their pay rise off them, off their families. How is their morale going? That is how you are going to send them back into war. You should be bloody proud of yourselves! As a matter of fact, you should be absolutely ashamed of yourselves. It is an absolute disgrace. Why don't you start looking after them and leading by example?

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Williams): The time for the debate has now expired. The question is the motion to suspend standing orders moved by Senator Milne be agreed to.

The Senate divided. [13:06]

(The Acting Deputy President—Senator Williams)

Ayes.....12
Noes.....40
Majority.....28

AYES

Di Natale, R
Lambie, J
Milne, C
Rice, J
Waters, LJ
Wright, PL

Hanson-Young, SC
Ludlam, S
Rhiannon, L
Siewert, R (teller)
Whish-Wilson, PS
Xenophon, N

NOES

Back, CJ
Bushby, DC
Canavan, M.J.
Colbeck, R
Cormann, M
Day, R.J.
Fawcett, DJ
Gallacher, AM
Lazarus, GP
Lundy, KA
Madigan, JJ
Mason, B
McKenzie, B
Muir, R
O'Sullivan, B
Polley, H

Bullock, J.W.
Cameron, DN
Carr, KJ
Collins, JMA
Dastyari, S
Edwards, S
Fifield, MP
Ketter, CR
Ludwig, JW
Macdonald, ID
Marshall, GM
McGrath, J
Moore, CM
O'Neill, DM
Peris, N
Reynolds, L

NOES

Ruston, A
Singh, LM
Urquhart, AE (teller)
Williams, JR

Seselja, Z
Smith, D
Wang, Z
Wong, P

Question negatived.