



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



## **THE SENATE**

### **STATEMENTS BY SENATORS**

#### **Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, Russia**

### **SPEECH**

**Wednesday, 29 October 2014**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

---

## SPEECH

<b>Date</b> Wednesday, 29 October 2014	<b>Source</b> Senate
<b>Page</b> 8125	<b>Proof</b> No
<b>Questioner</b>	<b>Responder</b>
<b>Speaker</b> Lambie, Sen Jacqui	<b>Question No.</b>

**Senator LAMBIE** (Tasmania—Deputy Leader and Deputy Whip of the Palmer United Party in the Senate) (13:37): I rise to address a matter that was raised in the media this morning regarding an alleged ASIO report which was leaked to Fairfax journalist Peter Hartcher. Today I have written to the Director-General of Security for ASIO, Mr David Irvine, and referred this matter to him for investigation. In the interests of openness and transparency, I will share that letter with the people of Tasmania and Australia. The letter is as follows:

Dear Director,

I draw to your attention to the news stories run today by Fairfax Media and authored by journalist Peter Harcher.

The front page of the Sydney Morning Herald features a picture of a woman wearing a burqa with the headline;

*"ASIO warns against banning the burqa"*

Another headline in the Canberra Times page 8 reads: *"ASIO finds burqa ban would fuel extremists"*

Allegedly, the ASIO report in the possession of Fairfax Media, claims that, "there is no valid security reason to ban the burqa.

*And the only security consequences of banning the burqa would likely be predominately, if not wholly, negative."*

In order to write and publish these articles, Mr Harcher and others clearly have had access to, as he reports or claims, to a *"confidential ASIO Report"*.

Can you please confirm for me as soon as possible and preferably by the close of business today, that the *"confidential ASIO Report"* is authentic?

I don't however expect the "ASIO" report that Fairfax Media has obtained to be authentic and I apologize in advance for wasting your time.

I expect in the course of your investigation, that you will find that it is a fraudulent document or a fake.

*(I've recently caught out Fairfax Media reporters misleading the public by omitting important facts in the burqa debate and deliberately publishing statements that they know are misleading.)*

However, if you did confirm that the document used by the media as the basis of their story was an authentic and an ASIO confidential report, it would then raise serious questions regarding the unbiased political nature, integrity and trustworthiness of ASIO—one of this country's most powerful departments.

The immediate question that would come to mind, if the report were from ASIO is:

How could a confidential ASIO Report, politically favorable to the Government and unfavorable to myself, find its way into the possession of a journalist a day after I announce that I was going to create legislation that would ban the burqa?

You would appreciate, if this confidential ASIO Report is proved authentic, that the question about whether ASIO considers the banning of the burqa a positive or negative thing is irrelevant, in the context of an officially confirmed leak of a confidential document.

The important questions are:

1. How did ASIO lose control of a confidential report?

2. Could it happen to other confidential ASIO Reports?
3. Has it happened in the past to other confidential ASIO Reports?
4. Is it likely to happen again to future confidential ASIO Reports
5. Are you confident that the process for drafting, managing, storing and tracking confidential ASIO Reports is good enough to protect Australia's national security?
6. Who leaked the confidential ASIO Report?
7. Did the person or persons responsible for the leak of the confidential report commit a crime?
8. Will they be held to account for their actions?
9. Who is responsible for holding them to account?
10. Given the obvious political nature and timing of the leak of the confidential ASIO Report—has there been unwarranted or illegal political interference with the day-to-day running of ASIO?

These questions would be raised at a time when the Parliament is about to pass laws which will further increase the already significant powers of ASIO at the expense of basic civil and human rights.

It also comes at a time when the Parliament is about to pass new laws, which effectively lessen the ability of the media, public and politicians to scrutinize the activities of ASIO.

You will also be aware that yesterday I announced that I had sent to the office of Parliamentary Council a report and request to draft Private Members' Legislation titled *Full Face Coverings Prohibition in Public Places (Summary Offences) Bill 2014*.

My Legislation, if passed by the Parliament, would effectively allow for a prohibition on the wearing of the burqa in Australia.

My public and political campaign to gather support for my Private Members' Legislation, if the media reports are accurate - will have been adversely affected by the leaking of an authentic, confidential ASIO document to the Australian media.

If the report referred to by the media is authentic—and the leak is found to be deliberate, then I would have to take expert advice and consider if this act was an example of ASIO trying to interfere with the free and fair performance of a member of parliament?

Or in other words—I would have to ask the serious question: Is ASIO in contempt of parliament?

The other important matter that would be raised should this document be authentic and generated by ASIO is the relevance and trustworthiness of the advice found in the Report.

I note that the Report is supposed to have been authored in 2010 or 2011. This of course is at a time before the extraordinary rise of today's Islamic extremist movement, which our country is effectively at war with.

The current 2014 crop of extremist, Islamic psychopaths we're trying to kill in Iraq and Syria before they butcher more innocents, I understand—views the Burka and Niqab as important symbols or flags for their religious / political movement.

When they see the Burka or Niqab being worn in public by subservient women, I'm of the understanding that the extremists regard that a great ideological and political victory.

And the sight of women with full-face coverings, boosts the Islamic extremists morale and fighting spirit because it is a strong indicator that their Sharia Laws and ideological values have begun to take hold in that particular society?

Of course that's only my views, you and your agency are the experts when it comes to the ideology, motives and reasons why these Islamic extremists want to butcher innocent people, take over the world and fly their flag on our Parliament.

I'm happy to take your advice—and would be keen to find out your personal views on the information found in the 2011 "confidential ASIO Report" cited by Fairfax Media.

I'm also happy to take a briefing from your agency on their current up-to-date views of the wearing of the burqa and other items or so called religious garb.

Given that this potential ASIO leak could be viewed as a political attack on a Senator of the Australian Parliament, and therefore an attack by one government power on another - I would expect a report or personal briefing on this matter in 24 hours - by 12 noon tomorrow.

I turn to another matter that does not deal with allegedly leaked ASIO reports—although it could, so I am going to get in first. Yesterday I met with the Russian ambassador, a very charming man indeed. Before another confidential ASIO report is leaked to the media, I take this opportunity to inform the parliament and people of Tasmania about our conversation and meeting. On behalf of the people of Tasmania, I presented the Russian ambassador with two bottles of vodka made at Hellyers Road Distillery near my home town of Burnie. He kindly accepted these gifts and indicated that he would like to visit Tasmania with a view to strengthening relationships and exploring new business opportunities with Tasmanian companies.

In addition, I also presented His Excellency with a T-shirt from the Ulverstone Judo Club. The club's executive—consisting of its president, John Deacon; Chris Palmer; Jamie Dodd; and Terry Von Bibra—and its members would like the Russian ambassador to pass the T-shirt on to President Putin, with their best wishes of course, and request that he agree to be the club's honorary patron. Many members of the judo club have expressed admiration for President Putin because of his promotion of the sport of judo. They think a match between President Putin and Prime Minister Abbott would be a great fundraiser—and they would have their money on President Putin. A barbecue, beers and a couple of vodkas from Hellyers Road Distillery afterwards would also be on the agenda—and great for international relations with a nuclear superpower.