

David Hicks – March 15, 2007

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond): I rise today to oppose this motion. As was mentioned by the member for Waite, our soldiers serving in these theatres seem to have been forgotten by members opposite.

They seem to make light of the fact that our soldiers are serving in Afghanistan, Iraq and beyond. As this house is well aware, my brother served a tour in Iraq. He also served in Rwanda 11 or 12 years ago. One of his compatriots, who was a 20-year soldier just like him, had previously served overseas in New Guinea and other places. After coming home from his tour of duty in Iraq, he now has the fear of walking into shopping centres because of what he had seen there—bombers hiding bombs under burqas.

Here, we are talking about David Hicks, who was taking up arms against our troops and, if it was not against our troops specifically, it was American or allied forces. What about all our soldiers who are serving in overseas conflicts, doing what they have to do for their nation and fighting terrorism? Where is the support for them from members opposite? We have heard about the World Trade Centre and other dastardly acts perpetrated by terrorists throughout the world. Here, we are talking about someone who willingly went overseas and trained to take up arms against our Defence Force. We need to think about the repatriation of our forces. We have troops who come home and cannot walk into shopping centres because they are frightened of crowds. They have done their service and they are paying a lifetime penalty for it.

I agree: let us get David Hicks tried. I think that it has been too long, but let us try him and, if possible, bring him home for detention. I do not believe that we can just bring him home, because I do not think that there is an Australian law under which we can try him.

An honourable member interjecting: That's scary.

Mr PEDERICK: I am advised that that is scary. As I said, he was not backpacking through Afghanistan and, from photographs I have seen, he was not backpacking through Kosovo with a grenade launcher on his shoulder. I agree that it has taken too long. They have laid charges, so they should try him and bring him home on detention on those charges.