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Turnbull Security Statement Signals More Same Oppressive, Failed Policy

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull delivered the Australian Government's latest National Security Statement last week, concurred with entirely by Opposition Leader Bill Shorten in his response. The statement was indistinguishable, as far as substantive content is concerned, from the last National Security Statement delivered by Tony Abbott earlier this year.

Hizb ut Tahrir Australia emphasises the following points about the Statement:

1. It continues the Australian Government's disingenuous approach of shifting blame for violence against innocent people away from the policies of western governments to ideology, as if violence arises in political vacuums. The Prime Minister spoke of ISIS while ignoring the role of western powers in leading to the rise of ISIS. He talked up the current western invasion in the Middle East while having nothing to say about the last one and its horrendous repercussions.

2. The "root cause of the threat we face" is not, as the Prime Minister suggested, a "perverted strain of Islamist extremist ideology". It is the perverted policies of western states in the Muslim world: war, invasion, death by drones and fighter jets, support for despots, economic exploitation and enforcing foreign ideologies and systems. If China, for instance, was executing such a foreign policy here in Australia, we would definitely expect and understand a reaction, not because of any "perverted" ideology but because violent oppression begets violent reactions.

3. The Prime Minister placed himself and his "60 nation-strong coalition" on the higher moral ground, taking people for fools. If western states were motivated by moral necessity to save innocent people, they would have militarily attacked the Syrian butcher, Bashar al-Assad, who had killed tens of thousands of innocent people, including with chemical weapons, before ISIS even existed. It is plain that the motivation is narrow political and economic interests and nothing more. Specifically, the motivation in Syria is to impose a solution in line with western interests, regardless of how many innocent people are sacrificed in the process.

4. The last western invasion of Iraq caused all sorts of problems. Its repercussion were devastating, foremost for the people of Iraq. That means nothing for western states who have now invaded again, this time in both Iraq and Syria. This current invasion – and an invasion is precisely what it is – will only make things worse.

5. Australian participation in both the last and current invasion represent Australian subservience to the US agenda in the Middle East. None of the policies being executed in Iraq and Syria are Australia's own. They are US policies for US interests first and foremost. The Prime Minister boasted about the fact that Australia's military contribution to the invading coalition forces in Iraq is "second only to that of the United States and...larger than any European nation." This only highlights the shameful extent of Australia subservience to and appeasement of the US.

6. The Prime Minister spoke of "fomenting resentment between non-Muslim populations and Muslims" while turning a blind eye to the role played in the same by mainstream media at home by talk-back shock-jocks and tabloid papers. His own senior ministers are regular appearances on third-rate talk-back shows that foment hatred against Islam and Muslims every day of the week.

7. On taking Syrian and Iraqi refugees, the Prime Minister affirmed the discriminatory policy of favoring Christians over Muslims on the pretext of focusing on "persecuted minorities". He also pandered to the baseless fears about refugees being a security concern stoked by right-wing commentators by proffering the assurance that "strict security, health and character checks will not be compromised."

8. On the whole, the Statement signals no change to the Australian Government's "counter-terrorism" policy, which, by all indicators, has only made things worse. By joining the US in its lighting of fires abroad, Australia is only increasing its chances of embers from those very fires falling here at home. Continuing to export oppression abroad while beefing up security at home is a recipe for failure all round.

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