

Interview with Alan Jones on 2GB on 5 July on Islamic Extremism

ALAN JONES: Julia Gillard at the weekend made great play of the fact that she wasn't politically correct and people weren't racist simply because they took strong views on boat people. Mind you, it's getting difficult to know which of these views is Julia Gillard's real view because only last week she had a different view on the mining tax and that's now gone 180 degrees. Now we're told she's got a different view entirely on boat people from the view that she rubber stamped when Kevin Rudd was leader - I'll have a look at that after 7.30. She's calling it Labour's "Heartened Policy".

But back to this politically correct business. If Julia Gillard is not politically correct, and she is the national leader, what would she say, and what should she say, about the hundreds of Islamic activists assembled in Sydney last weekend for a convention being held by the controversial Islamist group, Hizb ut-Tahrir? Now their members flew from Britain for the conference here in Sydney and we're told it was part of a series of events being held around the world as the group steps up its campaign for the formation of a transnational Islamic state. The theme of the conference was: "The Struggle for Islam in the West". And it was aimed at countering rising hostility to "all things Islamic in the Western world". An Australian spokesman for this mob said that in Australia and America and Britain "we see constant attacks on Islam, its values, practices and symbols." Well, I wonder why.

When this crowd last held their assembly in Australia in 2007, the Howard Government considered banning them in response to claims that they initiated religious hatred and indirectly encouraged terrorism. Now they support militant campaigns against western forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, they oppose the existence of Israel, but then tell you, hand on heart, Hizb ut-Tahrir's platform actually forbids its members from acts of terror.

Well, it didn't take long at the weekend to get them underway; they called on Australian Muslims at the weekend to spurn democracy and join the struggle for a transnational Islamic state. They said that democracy is haram - which is the word for forbidden for Muslims - and their political engagement should be based purely on Islamic law. And their British Hizb ut-Tahrir leader, Burnham Hanif, told about 500 participants attending the convention here in Sydney "we must adhere to Islam and Islam alone. We should not be conned or succumb to the disingenuous and flawed narratives - disingenuous means dishonest - that the only way to engage politically is through the secular democratic process, it is prohibited and haram - which is forbidden". He said democracy was incompatible with Islam, and he went on. And of course he gets away with it. Basically politicians and citizens are frightened to open their mouth.

An Australian Hizb ut-Tahrir official, Mr Wassim Dourehi, told the conference that Muslims should not support any Kaffir - which is a non-believer - political party, and urged Muslims to spurn the concept of moderate Islam promoted by governments in the west, including "in this Godforsaken country of

Australia". He said moderate Islam was "a perverted concoction of western governance".

I see there were protests from an outfit calling itself Australian Protectionist Party, who were yelling anti-Islam chants, and an organiser for them said this mob should be banned in Australia and thinks that the practising of Sharia law should be illegal. He said we're not asking them to change their skin colour or religion, but if they come here they must reject Sharia law.

Well, there's more. Des Moore, a life member of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute and Director of the Australian Institute for Private Enterprise, wrote recently about this Islamist threat to Australian security, highlighting the 77 page judgement on February 15 in the New South Wales Supreme Court where Mr Justice Anthony Whealy sentenced five men to maximum prison terms of between 17 and 28 years for conspiring to prepare for a terrorist attack.

What do we make of all of this, given that people are frightened to speak out? Des Moore's on the line. Des Moore, good morning.

DES MOORE: Good morning, Alan.

ALAN JONES: When these people were convicted on February 15, the sister of one of them was on ABC TV protesting their innocence. The President of the Islamic Friendship Association of Australia, Keysar Trad, claimed to detest terrorism and said the five had been victimised. Sheik Halali arranged a meeting in Lakemba at the mosque where 10 Imams and 20 community leaders issued a statement deriding the sentence as a travesty of justice.

We've now got a conference in Sydney telling us that Australian Muslims should spurn democracy. If we weren't politically correct, surely someone somewhere should have something to say about this?

DES MOORE: Absolutely. I mean, I think the whole of this development of extremist Islamic set is a serious threat to Australia and it's a serious threat overseas as well. It's not only the military activity in countries like Afghanistan that is necessary to counter them, we need to counter it domestically because it's a serious and life-threatening challenge to our culture.

ALAN JONES: Absolutely. Now you argued in your writing that despite these terrorist convictions earlier this year, which now amount to 25 in this country, and the thwarting of numerous terrorist attacks, and the active pursuit of Islamic objectives by a significant section of the Muslim community, you say the response by political, religious and business leaders has fallen well short of what is needed. Or indeed, like following last weekend, doesn't exist at all.

DES MOORE: Well, under our former Prime Minister Rudd, the government did issue a Counter-Terrorism White Paper but guess who advised them on that? Professor Saeed from Saudi Arabia, who's got a chair at Melbourne University.

ALAN JONES: And he constantly downplays the difference between Islamic and Christian cultures.

DES MOORE: Absolutely. No notice is taken of the Church of England man, by the name of Mark Durie, who has written a very good book called "The Third Choice" in which he recognises that inherent in the Muslim religion is a belief in taking violent action and the adoption of what you called Sharia law, and that would wipe out other religions and would subject people in any state that was established as an Islamic state - they would become in effect second rate citizens.

ALAN JONES: That's right. This Professor Saeed claims that Islamic terrorism has no foothold amongst Australian Muslims. What if a significant proportion of Muslims believe the stuff that was preached on Sunday, and also believed that Islam is an ideology that should be established if necessary by violence and under Sharia law, or should extinguish all other religions and subordinate the role of women, why are these people preaching if they don't expect the rest of the Muslim community to believe them?

DES MOORE: Well, exactly. And there is a group of people in the Muslim community who do accept this and that's reflected in the judgment that you referred to by Justice Whealy who said that he didn't believe that these people would in any way recant their views when they were in gaol.

ALAN JONES: That's right. In the United States at the end of last year, the New York Police Intelligence Division - and you've written about - reported that "the homegrown phenomenon is substantially greater than we've seen in the past".

DES MOORE: Well, since I wrote that the United States Government under Obama has published a couple of months ago what it calls the National Security Strategy and that is the first explicit recognition by the Government - the US government - of domestic sourced threat and at the nuclear summit which Obama held he said publicly that the biggest single threat to the United States was the risk of terrorists obtaining a nuclear weapon.

ALAN JONES: Yes, but he did say also - Obama - that America and Islam don't need to be in competition, that America is not and never will be at war with Islam, whereas the Somalian born ex Muslim, Ayan Hirshi Ali, has argued that it is not America that is at war with Islam, it's Islam that's at war with America. And I just come to this point: why would these people hold a conference last weekend, why they preach this stuff if they didn't expect their adherents to follow it?

DES MOORE: Yes, well of course they say they don't advocate terrorist activity.

ALAN JONES: They advocate ignoring democracy.

DES MOORE: Yes. But you can't outlaw someone for opposing democracy.

ALAN JONES: No. But you've already got a de facto application of Sharia law in some parts of the UK. Is this the thin edge of the wedge?

DES MOORE: Absolutely. I mean, if we get a bigger proportion of Muslims - we've got about 400,000 Muslims in Australia now, and the majority of them are moderate but it's not the moderate ones that we are concerned with, it's the ones who believe in this extremist activity.

ALAN JONES: But at the same time, talking about the moderates, they had something to say about that last weekend as well at this conference, and they talked about this Godforsaken country of Australia and they said that moderate Islam - this is the Australian Hizb ut-Tahrir official, this Wassim Dourehi - that the notion of moderate Islam was a perverted concoction of western governments.

DES MOORE: Yes. Well, what we've got to do, Alan, in my view, is we've got to have an active, what I call a cultural response. In the UK, where the problem is much greater than here, they have a Minister for Counter-Terrorism. We need a Minister for Counter-Terrorism who can actually promote our culture and criticise the Muslim culture and, as you said earlier, there was no political response to the jailing by Justice Whealy. Why wasn't there?

ALAN JONES: Why wasn't there. I mean, last year the Minister for Counter-Terrorism in Britain said that there are an estimated 2,000 suspected potential terrorists in the UK. Now you quote Newt Gingrich a year or so ago, a former speaker of the US House of Representatives, a possible Republican candidate in the next presidential election, saying: there are thousands of people across this planet who get up every morning actively seeking to destroy the United States.

DES MOORE: Absolutely.

ALAN JONES: They are spreading their poison by sermons, by the Internet, by a variety of recruiting devices. Now Tony Blair said the people who did the London subway bombing spoke English, were British citizens, lived in British housing and had jobs. So where do we fit into all of this while we shut up and tolerate what was being said last weekend by this outfit Hizb ut-Tahrir about democracy and a transnational Islamic state? Where do we fit in?

DES MOORE: Well, Hizb ut-Tahrir should be banned. They are banned in America, and we've got to take a much more aggressive response to this sort of activity.

ALAN JONES: Well, Julia Gillard is our national leader. If she says she's not politically correct, if she's not politically correct, what should be her response to this and what should we be doing on the migration front?

DES MOORE: Well, one of the things that should be done is to toughen the asylum seeker policy. There's a lot of evidence that people who are coming in as asylum seekers are not really asylum seekers and ASIO has complained that they don't have the time or the capacity to do proper security checks.

ALAN JONES: That's right, that's right. Tony Abbott is now saying - I'm looking at that after 7.30 - no ID, no entry. These are staggering figures, aren't they? In 2008/09, there were over 4.3 million visas issued to enter this country.

DES MOORE: Yeah.

ALAN JONES: Only 500,000 were permanents and only 60,000 involved security assessments.

DES MOORE: Right.

ALAN JONES: So there's a hell of a lot of people who are potential terrorists could be coming into the country when you're issuing 4.3 million visas and only 60,000 involve security assessments.

DES MOORE: Right. ASIO has pointed out that last year they did 65,000 security checks for counter-terrorism. They're under extreme pressure because there is no other activity dealing with this problem.

ALAN JONES: Whealy said in the judgment that there's a worrying number of extremist Islamists who are never going to integrate. Shouldn't we have a national view about this?

DES MOORE: Well, we should and we should, as I said, have a Minister for Counter-Terrorism whose responsibility it is to produce a cultural response. He should have been out in the public arena criticising the Muslim activity, the extremist activity, that was reflected in Justice Whealy's decision.

ALAN JONES: Good to talk you, Des Moore, and I thank you for your time. It's a very important debate; I'm not sure we're going to get a debate because these people hang around after votes, don't they, at the end of the day but thank you for talking to us.

DES MOORE: Well, the votes question is a part of the problem.

ALAN JONES: It is.

DES MOORE: Politicians won't intervene because they're frightened it might affect their votes in some of their electorates.

ALAN JONES: Absolutely. Good to talk to you, Des, and I thank you for your time.

DES MOORE: Okay, Alan.

ALAN JONES: That's Des Moore. The other point to be made is there simply aren't enough Muslims in the country who will persuade their religious compatriots to accept that they should become true Australians, rather than force Australians to become like them. No statement from anyone in Canberra about this conference in Sydney last weekend condemning democracy and, of course, calling us - well, all sorts of things really, a Godforsaken country.