

Andrew Bolt: Facts on terror can't be denied

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ASIO boss Duncan Lewis seemed to prove yesterday the political class protects its own when he publicly made incorrect statements about Islam and refugees. Last week Lewis told a Senate committee — on oath — something obviously incorrect: “I have absolutely no evidence to suggest there’s a connection between refugees and terrorism.”

[COUNTER-TERROR FORCES OVERSTRETCHED DUE TO ‘UNPRECEDENTED CASELOAD’](#)

In fact, days earlier the NSW Coroner made findings on the Lindt cafe siege by an Iranian refugee and the son of Libyan refugees killed 22 people in the Manchester suicide bombing. Lewis had also overlooked other terrorism here by Muslim refugees: Farhad Jabar, Numan Haider, Muhammad Ali Baryalei and Saney Edow Aweys. And he’d missed that more than 30 people on ASIO’s terrorist watchlist tried to come here as refugees in the past 17 months.



Muhammad Ali Baryalei, a known member of an Islamic State. Picture: ABC

You’d think an ASIO boss saying something so incorrect about a clear danger would alarm our politicians. But no. Yesterday Attorney-General George Brandis actually defended him: “The point he made is that Australia’s refugee program is not the source of the terrorism problem.”

Really? So where did those terrorists I listed come from? A cornflakes packet? Labor leader Bill Shorten also covered up: “Lewis ... is making the point that there are criminal terrorists that don’t represent a whole population of people.” Except that’s not what Lewis said.

Then Lewis hopped on to the safe ABC to reinvent what he actually did say. Now he conceded refugees had indeed turned to terrorism but added: "The refugee program is not the source of terrorism in Australia; the source is radical Sunni Islam."

But Lewis has still made a distinction without a difference.

Bringing in Muslim refugees brings in more people prone to fall for that jihadist strain of Islam and put more Australians in danger. That is the fear Lewis denied last week. Still, blaming Sunni Islam is progress from two years ago, when Lewis remarkably claimed: "I don't buy the notion the issue of Islamic extremism is in some way fostered or sponsored or supported by the Muslim religion."

Attorney-General George Brandis has defended ASIO boss Duncan Lewis. Picture: AAP

But I'm worried if Lewis believes there's no Shiite terrorism threat. Lebanon's Hezbollah is a Shiite group with a terrorist wing and has prominent supporters in Australia, including two former grand muftis.

And Lewis still hasn't acknowledged a plain fact: bringing in Muslim refugees does indeed expose us to more danger.