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CORRECTIONS

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Wednesday, 29 June 2011

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BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

Wind the clock forward 70 years and you could not find a more apt description of those opposite. Nowhere is this better exemplified than in the field of foreign policy as exercised by our former Prime Minister and now Minister for Foreign Affairs, the member for Griffith. He lurches from one disaster to another, from one train wreck to the next. We had such high hopes for him, a Mandarin-speaking former diplomat with postings to Beijing and Stockholm; a man who hounded Laurie Brereton in the shadow foreign affairs portfolio before depositing him with a knife as sharp as the one used by Wayne Swan.

During his term as foreign minister, like his term as Prime Minister, we have had one of the worst foreign policy records in living memory. Labor has ignored our region and Australia is worse off for it. It is worth recalling this litany of failures, country by country and issue by issue. I start with Japan, which was bypassed by the foreign minister on his first trip as Prime Minister. The quadrilateral security dialogue between India, the United States, Australia and Japan was abandoned. He promised to haul Japan before the International Court of Justice on whaling, just as the Japanese foreign minister was landing in Australia. In China, the foreign minister lectured them on human rights and then worried about the Manchurian candidate moniker starting to stick. So when he was sitting next to the Chinese ambassador in a TV interview in London he quickly changed the seating arrangements. How humiliating was that?

With Indonesia we had the *Oceanic Viking* stand-off, and now we have got the fiasco around live cattle exports. The problem is that we are high-handed in our relationship with Indonesia, rather than treating it as a partnership of equals. With Malaysia, the foreign minister has failed to lift a hand on the five-for-one people swap, damaging our bilateral relationship in the process. With East Timor, he allowed the Prime Minister to announce an agreement that never existed. With the South Pacific, it is absolutely disgraceful that the foreign minister has not visited there as foreign minister. We are the largest donor in the South Pacific. Could you imagine a CEO not going to visit the countries or the places where his money is being spent? With Fiji, we have been excluded from regional forums. With Papua New Guinea, when it came to Manus Island, we were nowhere to be seen; we do not have a foreign minister who is willing to visit.

With India, we have failed to sell uranium to them despite urging our partners in the Nuclear Suppliers Group—another 44 countries—to do so. With the United States, the foreign minister, when he was Prime Minister, was responsible for a well-publicised leak of a private conversation with George Bush. When it comes to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade we have a situation where, as Prime Minister, he vetoed the appointment of Hugh Borrowman as an

ambassador because he allegedly did not possess the requisite foreign language skills. Many people suspected that it was to settle old scores.

Then there is the Asia-Pacific community, his own private idea. He was not happy with APEC, he was not happy with the ASEAN Regional Forum and he was not happy with an East Asia Summit. So he had to come up with the Asia-Pacific community by 2020. Marty Natalegawa, the then foreign minister of Indonesia, said it is 'another layer, an out-of-nowhere construction not in concert, not in synergy with what we have'. It came as a surprise to Ambassador Woolcott, who was approached to lead this initiative just two hours before the Prime Minister announced it. The UN Security Council has diverted key resources away from our 90-odd missions overseas, and the Governor-General was sent on a very unusual seven-nation tour of Africa. The problem is we have a Prime Minister who is not interested in foreign affairs and we have a Minister for Foreign Affairs who is not talking to the Prime Minister. In the member for Griffith's maiden speech, he said:

Politics is about power. It is about the power of the state.

Well, he has visited over 40 countries, travelled 300,000 miles and has very little to show for it. Henry Kissinger said:

If you don't know where you are going, every road will get you nowhere.

Unfortunately, this reflects Australian foreign policy. (*Time expired*)

Moreton Electorate: Muslim Community

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (19:45): That is five minutes of my life I will never get back. In recent days there has been a bit of media about a Muslim woman and the need for her to remove her burqa. I refer to an article from today's *Daily Telegraph*. Sometimes there is a bit of hysteria associated with this and it can lead politicians, shock jocks and other people to listen to their lesser angels. Sometimes their race to condemn multiculturalism and play to the fears of some means that Muslim Australians are again the victims of the opposition's divisive and ignorant political games—maybe. I mention particularly the opposition immigration spokesperson, the member for Cook; the shadow parliamentary secretary, Senator Bernardi; and the member for Dawson, who made some interesting comments in the House yesterday:

It has occurred to me that there is something missing from this blame game. They are quick to blame Australian farmers and the industry, but they have not said anything about the religion that actually inspires the torture of the cattle there.

It is very misguided for a country person to not understand. But I will say that the member for North Sydney is one courageous exception amongst a few on the other side of the chamber. I have seen, in the bipartisan, friendly games of touch football, that the

member for North Sydney knows how to use his head, but he also knows how to listen to his heart.

In my first speech to this chamber, I committed to stand up for my multicultural community. It was not some empty leftie, politically correct ideal; my core belief is that everyone matters. This includes the nearly 5,000 people in Moreton who identify as Muslim. They come from Bosnia, Sudan, Iraq, Pakistan, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Egypt, Somalia, Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia and Afghanistan. If you listened to the opposition, you would think that places like Moreton, where one in three people were born overseas, were a melting pot of racial tension and division. Nothing could be further from the truth.

I invite the member for Cook, Senator Bernardi, the member for Dawson and any other members opposite to visit my electorate and see for themselves the vibrant, harmonious community that is Brisbane's Southside. If they were to visit, what would they see? If they were to share a meal with me at Michael's Oriental Restaurant, a place where Chinese, Muslims and the rest of us converge, would they still revolt against multiculturalism? Scout Finch said in *To Kill a Mockingbird*:

... you never really know a man until you stand in his shoes and walk around in them.

So, Member for Cook, Senator Bernardi and Member for Dawson, come and walk in the shoes of multicultural Moreton. You will see that my patch is home to about five or six mosques, including Holland Park, which at 102 years old, is the oldest mosque in Queensland. You will also find progressive Islamic schools and Griffith University's Griffith Islamic Research Unit, a network of scholars who research Islam in Australia and seek to bridge the gap between Islam and the West. The unit's director and founder, Dr Mohamad Abdalla, is a champion for social inclusion and racial harmony in Brisbane.

Those opposite would also see a Muslim community which has remained committed to racial and religious harmony. The leaders of the Islamic community have done so much to foster greater respect and understanding between Muslims and others. One of these leaders is Mustafa Ally, who edits an online news website, *Crescents of Brisbane*. He was also the 2008 Multicultural Citizen of the Year.

The Muslim people in my electorate are not living in ghettos; they embrace and personify Australian culture and Australian values. Following the Brisbane floods, 400 volunteers turned up at the Kuraby Mosque to offer help and financial support to flood-affected people, particularly in my electorate. They raised more than \$50,000 for the flood effort, to be distributed to individuals. They were hands-on distributing meals to flooded households, to volunteers and to police on the streets—no prayers, just a practical helping hand. Together, they cooked more than 2,000 meals, and 20

Muslim tradespeople from New South Wales came up to Queensland to help—for free, gratis. The Islamic Women's Association of Queensland is also doing good work in the Moreton electorate, through aged care and other community services.

To paraphrase the former Liberal Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, it is not multiculturalism that has failed; rather it is those who seek to stir up division and fear who have failed. The last time we had politicians—redheaded ones—exaggerating racial division, one of the mosques in my electorate was firebombed. That is why I will not allow the voices of fear and ignorance to reign again. They deserve no oxygen and they deserve the strongest condemnation from everyone on both sides of the chamber. My commitment to the people of Moreton on the date of my first speech, 17 February 2008, remains my commitment now: that we should not tolerate voices that seek to divide the community; instead we should recognise those that are doing great work and are keeping our community together. That is the sort of Moreton that I am fighting for and that is the sort of Australia that I would hope all people in this chamber are fighting for. (*Time expired*)

High-Speed Rail

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (19:50): Right now, airports across the country are dealing with enormous backlogs of passengers from hundreds of domestic and international flights cancelled because of the volcanic ash cloud. Qantas, Virgin Blue and Tiger have cancelled various flights across Bass Strait and into and out of Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney as well as a number of other airports. If ever there was another reason for high-speed rail, it is the current state of air chaos.

If we had high-speed rail between our big cities at the moment, the trains would be packed with happy travellers getting from Sydney to Melbourne and Sydney to Brisbane in three or four hours. Travel between my electorate and Canberra on a high-speed rail network would take about two hours. When you add travel time to and from the airports for the equivalent journey by air, two hours is not an inconvenient time. When you consider that the journey could be completed with comfortable seats, phone and internet access and a carbon footprint a mere fraction of the air equivalent, its benefits are compelling.

The constituents in my electorate understand the benefits of this key nation-building infrastructure product. My office has been bombarded with correspondence calling for high-speed rail—three hours from Melbourne to Sydney and four hours from Canberra to Newcastle. A high-speed rail link on Australia's east coast, through Canberra, would provide fast, reliable and sustainable transport for 75 per cent of our population.