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Howard to strengthen terror laws

John Kerin

JOHN Howard has signalled harsher penalties for inciting terrorism and longer detention for terror suspects, warning that Australians will have to accept further curbs on civil liberties to thwart deadly attacks.

Sweeping changes to terror laws, including granting police wider powers to arrest and detain suspects, will be the focus of a terror summit of state and territory leaders to be held in Canberra next month.

Unveiling plans for the summit yesterday, the Prime Minister dismissed concerns over cuts to civil liberties, saying he was focused on protecting lives.

"The most important civil liberty I have, and you have, is to stay alive and to be free from violence and death," he said. "I think when people talk about civil liberties they sometimes forget that action taken to protect the citizen against physical violence and physical attack is a blow in favour and not a blow against civil liberties."

His comments were echoed by British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who last night unveiled a raft of tough new measures to crack down on terrorism in the wake of the London bomb attacks last month.

Mr Blair said Britain would consider amending its Human Rights Act, which incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights into domestic law, to make it easier to deport people involved in inciting terrorism. Under the new laws, anyone who had been involved in terrorism would be refused asylum in Britain.

Mr Howard said he was "currently assessing (his) attitude" to tougher laws against people who incited terrorism.

Refuge of a radical scoundrel

Cameron Stewart

HE preaches that Osama bin Laden is a great man and he does not oppose local Muslims travelling to Iraq to fight Australian troops.

But 15 years ago, self-styled Melbourne Islamic radical Nacer Benbrika told a very different story to Australian authorities when pleading to stay in this country.

He told them it was "his love of the Australian lifestyle" that made him want to live here.

What is more, Benbrika, who now openly supports violent jihad overseas, told authorities in 1990 that he feared for his life if he were sent back to the "dangers" of his native Algeria.

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The Howard Government is overhauling its long-held policy of multiculturalism with a new emphasis on shared values and secularism.

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"(But) I wouldn't be calling this meeting if I didn't think they, at the very least, required a further review."

He said laws relating to detaining terror suspects would also be discussed at the special Council of Australian Governments meeting next month. However, he did not believe the British proposal for suspects to be detained for three months was appropriate.

Under the current Australian criminal code, a person who incites a terrorist attack faces a maximum jail term of up to 10 years. ASIO can question terror suspects for 24 hours — or 48 hours if an interpreter is needed — in any seven-day period.

Among other matters Mr Howard wants discussed at the meeting — requested by the state premiers in a letter sent last last month — are the concept of a national identity card, tighter security for public

transport and efforts to boost community understanding of the threat posed by terrorism.

The tougher measures are endorsed in a review of Australia's counter-terrorism arrangements by Attorney-General Philip Ruddock following last month's bomb attacks in London. His review will be presented to cabinet's powerful National Security Committee next week, before being considered at the leaders summit towards the end of next month.

A team led by the Australian Federal Police that travelled to London after the bombings is expected to attend the summit, along with experts from Britain.

Mr Howard's focus on laws against inciting terrorism follows provocative comments from several Australian Muslims praising al-Qa'ida leader Osama bin Laden and supporting the Islamic jihad being waged on Western countries.

NSW Council of Civil Liberties president Cameron Murphy said plans to strengthen anti-terror legislation could leave Australia looking like "Stalinist Russia".

Treasurer Peter Costello backed Mr Howard's stance, saying it was "going to take laws that will curtail the civil liberties of some people and it is going to take a long resolve of will from the Government and the people" to meet the challenge of terrorism.

But Labor leader Kim Beazley accused Mr Howard of "making it up as he goes along" on terrorism.

The premiers of Western Australia, NSW, Queensland, Victoria and South Australia endorsed the summit.

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Since then, Benbrika has freely roamed the dark side of Melbourne's Muslim community, teaching a radical interpretation of Islam to young, impressionable Muslim youths.

Now authorities fear that this 45-year-old former aircraft engineer poses a threat to the very Australian lifestyle he once claimed to love.

ASIO has twice raided his Broadmeadows home in connection with an investigation into suspected plots to blow up prominent Melbourne landmarks, including Flinders Street railway station.

His passport has been confiscated and Benbrika and his small band of devotees are monitored around the clock by ASIO and the Australian Federal Police.

In the face of dwindling community and political tolerance of such extremist views, Prime Minister John Howard yesterday criticised radical clerics such as Benbrika who openly supported jihad.

"A jihad is the epitome of intolerance, is the epitome of the negativity and darkness which we do not want in this country," Howard said.

But if this "darkness" was inside Benbrika when he arrived as a visitor to this country in 1989, he hid it well

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From a Berlin bunker to a Noosa beach: the secret life of Hitler's secretary



Place in the sun: Traudl Junge relaxing at Noosa Heads during one of her stays in Australia

John Lehmann
Natasha Robinson

ADOLF Hitler's devoted secretary, who spent the final days of the Third Reich huddled with the Führer in his Berlin bunker, quietly lived in Australia for several years in the 1970s and 80s after she was earlier refused permanent residency for being a Nazi sympathiser.

Traudl Junge — the central character of the recent controversial movie *Downfall*, which attempts to humanise Hitler — tried to beat the onset of depression years after World War II by starting a new life in Australia.

family members and friends in Sydney and Melbourne have revealed for the first time.

She lived in Sydney with her younger sister over two years in about 1975-76, spent another 18 months there in the early 80s, and visited Melbourne in 1992 and 1995. *The Weekend Australian* has been told.

Friends said that as recently as 10 years ago, she was considering reapplying for permanent Australian residency. "She loved Australia and the people," her sister, Inge Kaye, 81, said from her Sydney nursing home.

Photographs from the Kaye

family album show Junge, the daughter of a Nazi party official, relaxing on the beach in Noosa Heads, enjoying the sunshine in Cairns and catching up with friends in Melbourne.

Junge's sympathetic reflections on Hitler — she continued to describe him as "a kindly, thoughtful man" even after the full horrors of his reign emerged — formed the basis of *Downfall*, which began screening in Australia in April.

It has become Germany's highest-grossing film, but provoked anger from some viewers who claimed it glorified the



Married to the SS: Traudl and Hans Junge, centre



'A kindly, thoughtful man': Hitler with Junge, his orderly

mass-murdering architect of the Holocaust.

Junge was a 22-year-old bearing a resemblance to Hitler's mistress, Eva Braun, when he hand-picked her to work as one of his secretaries in 1942.

It was an exciting moment for Junge, who confided years later that she had daydreamed about saving the Führer's life as a teenager growing up in Munich.

Only six months after starting work for Hitler, she married his valet and orderly, SS officer Hans Junge — at her boss's insistence, she later claimed to Melbourne friend Margaret Williams.

He was killed in action in Normandy in 1944.

Junge, who struck up a close relationship with Braun during their years together, was among the last people to see Hitler alive before he and Braun swallowed cyanide tablets in a Berlin bunker two days after hastily marrying.

Hitler also shot himself in the head.

After the war, Junge was exonerated as a "youthful fellow traveller" by Germany's denazification commission, but said she couldn't escape a "growing sense

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Telstra sale could be off, Nats warned

Dennis Shanahan
Michael Sainsbury

JOHN Howard has convened a war council of senior ministers to discuss the troubled Telstra privatisation amid warnings from inside Government that the \$30 billion-plus sale will be scrapped if rebel Nationals ask too much.

Communications Minister Helen Coonan was called into yesterday's meeting at the Lodge to discuss the details of legislation for the sale of Telstra, which is expected to be passed before

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Christmas. Ahead of parliament's resumption next week, the strategy meeting lasted several hours, with Telstra dominating the agenda.

Senator Coonan briefed the Liberal leadership group — comprising the Prime Minister, Peter

Costello, Robert Hill and Nick Minchin, as well as Nationals leaders Mark Vaile and Warren Truss — on her plans for the sale.

The federal Government's plans to sell its remaining 51.8 per cent stake in Telstra have been thrown into disarray by the escalating demands of some Nationals MPs to guarantee their support for the sale.

Senior Liberal MPs are now warning that the Government will pull the sale if the Nationals' demands are unrealistic, leaving the bush with no new funds for telecommunications services.

"They have to understand that if the Nationals reject the Telstra bill in the Senate, then it won't be coming back," one senior cabinet minister told *The Weekend Australian* yesterday.

"If that happens there won't be any extra funds for the bush." The surprise entry of Telstra's new chief executive Sol Trujillo into the debate this week has further complicated the Government's plans for the sale.

In his first public speech since taking the reins at Telstra, Mr

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