



23rd January 2003

ANDREN SUPPORTS PARLIAMENT RECALL

Independent Member for Calare Peter Andren is fully supporting the call by the Australian Democrats and Greens for the recall of the Senate in the wake of the departure of Australian troops for the Middle East.

‘In fact both houses of parliament should be recalled to debate this prime ministerial decision that flies in the face of overwhelming public opposition to our involvement in a war with Iraq unless there is a UN sanction’ Mr Andren said.

‘Constituents from all over my electorate have backed up these national opinion polls in their opposition to the prime minister’s decision to invite Australia to a war that has nothing to do with us.

‘It is no good the prime minister, the defence minister and various military apologists saying we are not going to war, but are simply sending a message to Saddam Hussein.

‘France, China and Russia, along with Germany have indicated they won’t be supporting any action against Iraq in the absence of far more evidence than has been turned up so far.

‘The chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix says he needs a few more months to make any meaningful assessment of Saddam’s weaponry.

‘What happens if the United States decides to press on without UN support? Do we follow the US blindly into a campaign with no international legitimacy and be part of a campaign that could kill thousands of innocent Iraqis?

‘If we did, we could be fairly accused of committing war crimes’ Mr Andren said.

‘At the very least Parliament should be recalled next week to debate this crisis, as former PM Bob Hawke was forced to do when we sent troops to Iraq in 1991.

‘Then, of course, the commitment of troops was part of an international coalition sanctioned by the United Nations. At this point our involvement is totally illegitimate’, Mr Andren concluded.

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