

# JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE & TRADE

MEDIA STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIRMAN  
SENATOR ALAN FERGUSON

## WATCHING BRIEF ON THE WAR ON TERRORISM

I am pleased to announce that the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade will be conducting a Watching Brief on Australia's involvement in the War on Terrorism and in related actions in response to terrorism.

The Watching Brief will involve briefings each month from key Australian Defence Force personnel and other officials on the nature and extent of Australia's current commitment to the War on Terrorism; on possible future scenarios; on domestic and regional risks; and on the preparedness of domestic agencies to respond to terrorist threats.

We will also invite diplomatic representatives from our coalition partners to discuss the commitments made by their governments. It is likely also that we will take evidence at public hearings from non-government and academic sources on the causes and possible responses to emerging terrorist threats.

At intervals during our Watching Brief, we will report to Parliament on emerging issues such as:

- the nature of international military, diplomatic and legal responses to terrorism; or
- Australia's capacity to sustain a long term commitment to the War on Terrorism; or
- Australia's preparedness to combat domestic acts of terror.

Australia has made a major commitment to the War on Terrorism:

- despatching 1 550 military personnel, including capabilities from Special Forces, Navy frigates and a transport ship with air defence, long range maritime patrol aircraft, tanker aircraft and F/A-18 fighter aircraft;
- taking action to freeze the financial assets of organisations with links to terrorism; and
- contributing to international efforts to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

We intend to monitor the impact and duration of Australia's commitment and contribute to broader community awareness and understanding of the various issues involved.

Canberra  
22 May 2002

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For information contact Grant Harrison, the Committee Secretary on (02) 6277 4629.