



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Govt & Opposition avoid vote on war with Iraq Parliament adjourned now till March

The Parliamentary tactics of the Liberal/National Coalition Government and the Labor Opposition have combined to prevent a vote of the Federal Parliament on Australia's involvement in any war with Iraq.

The Independent Member for Calare, who had moved an amendment to the Prime Minister's Statement on Iraq last week to add that Australia should not be involved in any conflict without the UN Security Council's unanimous support, moved to bring on the vote to his amendment.

"Mr Andren could see, and I agreed with him, that with the debate on Iraq being shunted to the Main Committee (where 'uncontentious' issues are discussed) and put behind other business, that the debate would not conclude before the rising of this sitting of the Parliament and therefore would lay on the table until March 3.

With the speed of things happening in circumstances surrounding the situation in Iraq, by March 3, Australia could already be committed by the Prime Minister to joining the United States and 'the Coalition of the Willing' to attacking Iraq without the full UN sanction – all this done without the Parliament of Australia having the opportunity to represent the views of Australians who in the majority are against such action," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor, who seconded Mr Andren's amendment is very disappointed that Opposition and the Government took the position that Mr Andren's motion to bring on the vote has been portrayed as 'stifling debate' on the war with Iraq rather than a positive action to showing the people of Australia that their Parliamentarians were truly prepared to take the tough decision and not just go with the flow with the wishy washy excuse that not every Member had had the opportunity to speak in the debate.

"The so-called debate on Iraq was always a convenient smokescreen for both the Government and Opposition to air the concerns of the electorate but never commit themselves to any vote of the Parliament.

Mr Andren and I tried to force that commitment today but the Government and the Opposition combined to silence the will of the Australian people," Mr Windsor said.

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