

Fanciful Threats: The “Plot” on the Australian Prime Minister

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Region: [Oceania](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

The fantasy driven Herald Sun has always enjoyed a good screech with headlines. While hardly compares to that other Murdoch rag, The Sun, which runs both humour and hysteria in its lines, it does attempt to frighten its readers into grievous despair. And nothing does this better, it would seem, than talking up the radicalisation threat in Australia, the lurking monsters that creep out at night with machetes awaiting to attack figures of authority. Naturally, Allah and Mohammed are meant to be their inspiring companions.

The tabloid screeching has reached new levels, with more desperate accretions on the story that the Prime Minister of Australia, Tony Abbott, was the “target” of a “plot” by various young men who have assumed cartoonish proportions. The documents centred around the so-called Anzac Day terror plots, released by Justice Peter Riordan who lifted the suppression order on transcripts of conversations between 18-year-old Sevdet Besim and a 14-year-old boy in England. These came in the form of “explosive documents” that the paper perused, though a perusal by everyone else reveals nothing that incendiary.

Instead, they reveal the minds of disturbed and aggrieved teenagers keen to have an impact in the manner puerile aspirants seek. They allegedly sought weapons. They allegedly were involved in plans, if they even warrant that term, that seems to have been given retrospective coherence by inventive police accounts. Plots, after all, tend to have a degree of certainty.

Besim’s alleged involvement comprised mourning at the grave of the late Numan Haider before being arrested in April. In broken patois more reminiscent of satirical nonsense, Besim is said to have communicated to his English-based counterpart how, “After Numan r.a. (sic) did his op here and I heard this it was enough for me to say that’s it im doing this. Im gonna fight these enemies of Allah.” This would have involved fire arms and “a massive machete”.

In what can only be described as the views and attitudes of a terrorist thespian and errant child, the English-based figure observed how, “You are a lone wolf, a wolf that begs Allah for forgiveness a wolf that doesn’t fear blame of the blamers.” Police have read volumes into this exchange. They do not see children so much as well motivated terrorists on the make.

Using voice-over-internet protocol (VOIP), Besim is said to have discussed possible attacks on the Shrine of Remembrance and the federal police headquarters at La Trobe Street. “Lik[sic] I said though I’d love to take out some cops. Intelligence agents.” Apparently, he could not “wait now for the op”.

Accompanying Besim would have been co-accused Harun Causevic, another 18-year-old

who was going to accompany Besim after nabbing a car to run down a police officer, behead the person in question and use available weapons to shoot others on Anzac Day. Much like Grand Theft Auto without the screen.

Central to this ill-planned, cumbersome balderdash was the fate of 18-year-old Haider, who was shot dead by police having, it is claimed, attacked two officers without warning. Haider was killed outside the Endeavour Hills police station in Melbourne's south-east in September 2014. What had ensued was a messy melee of aggravation and blood, Haider having been invited to discuss the cancellation of his passport, a fact he did not take too well too. Both a Victorian officer and an Australian Federal Police officer were stabbed. The Victorian officer subsequently shot Haider in the head after the assailant's refusal to stop stabbing the fallen AFP officer.

A feature that is evaded by way of convenience was the undue interest the authorities showed in Haider prior to the event. In some ways, he provides an object study about how to invite assault and mayhem when mere delusionary outbursts might have sufficed. A religious, confused fanatic is not necessarily a problem till he has a grievance to feed. The police were particularly keen to emphasise how Haider had brandished "a black flag with white Arabic writing emblazoned on it at a Dandenong shopping plaza." [1]

This says absolutely nothing about the young man, other than the petty grand standing that accompanies such acts. But the police, short on Arabic translators, persisted in asking Haider what his flag featured. In cavalier fashion, he replied that they "should know what it said and to Google it". While he was not present "to bomb the plaza... your government will pay."

The accounts by some papers suggest that Haider had it in for Abbott, though it is hard to actually give that any credence on looking at the transcripts. *The Age* is dry but direct. "In documents released by a Supreme Court judge on Wednesday, police allege Numan Haider's actions constituted an implied threat towards Mr Abbott." [2] *The Herald* is dramatic and overwrought. "It can now be revealed that two teens charged over an alleged Anzac Day terror plot were close associates of Haider's and were with him until just half an hour before his death." [3]

Actions of ideological bravura and religious fervour, notably by young men in suburban Australia, are not necessarily signs of terrorist motivation. Incompetence and inertia tend to be their enemies. Ennui is draining but hardly worthy of domestic engagement. Political assassinations and attacks on police stations demand a degree of ruthless skill and cruel indifference to life. Mere babbling doesn't suggest actual worth.

Detective Senior Sergeant Adam Shoesmith is, however, convinced. As a member of the counter-terrorism team, he claimed that his office had received information "from a highly reliable source" on the movements of Haider. The link is then made between the death of Haider, and two other suspects.

The definitions of plots keep getting thinner with each exposure and media sensation. The mere mention of the word radicalisation conjures up the grounds, the basis of conviction. There is no margin for error - this is the world of assumptions, one of absolute truths. And Abbott and the Murdoch press seem to have that sewn up. Pre-emptive criminality, not actual proof, is what gains attention.

The means are barely there, even if they did show a desire to get arms or a machete. Nor was there any opportunity to present itself. A mere inarticulate desire to kill a leader of a state regarded as an imbecile and oppressive is hardly more dangerous than the mental drivel of teenagers seeking world domination.

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Notes

[1] <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/judge-releases-alleged-communications-between-teenage-terror-suspect-sevdet-besim-and-14yearold-uk-boy-over-anzac-day-plot-20150603-ghfqxj.html>

[2] <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/judge-releases-alleged-communications-between-teenage-terror-suspect-sevdet-besim-and-14yearold-uk-boy-over-anzac-day-plot-20150603-ghfqxj.html>

[3] <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/law-order/teen-shot-dead-by-cops-behind-pm-terror-plot--explosive-court-papers-reveal/story-fni0fee2-1227381495878>

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