



DUTTON OR TURNBULL NEEDLES IN THE HAYSTACK.

Abalinx 22 August 2018 Peter Adamis

It has been an extraordinary two days in Australian political history. Two days filled with so many players involved that it is difficult to separate the wheat from the chaff in order to find the needle in the haystack.

As Australians we expect nothing but the best from our political representatives and therefore are critical of those who fail to produce what they said they would do. We, the public are of the belief that the role of government is to safe guard the interests of Australia and all Australians by responsibly managing resources, maintaining a strong economy, being competitive globally, maintaining secure borders and ensuring Australia's longevity in a never ending environment of change.

Having said the above, we the public have had the luxury of reflecting back on the past ten years and wonder whether our political representatives have produced what they promised. Given that we have had seven Prime Ministers, I am of the personal opinion that that they have failed in one way or another. Mind you this is not a criticism but merely an observation based facts that is readily available if one does their research.

During that time, those seven Prime Ministers, rightly or wrongly thought they had the right mix of left, moderate and right wing political pillars that represented the Australian public. However in each case the governments of the day were torn apart by internal rivalry not seen since the days of Sir Robert Menzies. In retrospect, we cannot argue that Bob Hawke was the only other Prime Minister who galvanised and energised the Australian people by laying the foundations to meet the demands of the future.

Those days are gone and the ideologies that separate the Liberal and Labor Parties are now indistinguishable, depriving the Australian people of clear guidelines to enable them to vote for what is in the best interests of Australia. Therefore it is no wonder that Australians have lost faith and stopped believing in the rhetoric of their political representatives.

To obtain a better understanding of the past two days we must return to a time when Tony Abbot was Prime Minister. Tony Abbot was a strong leader, loyal to colleagues, committed and dedicated to Liberal Party conservative values was never in question. He had selected a great team to assist him but in my opinion failed to consult widely, making a few innovative but unwelcome "captain's calls" and thus losing the public support needed to win government. That he was on the cusp of regaining popularity after being chastised and criticised behind closed door may be true, but the conspirators had already sharpened their knives for the slaying of Caesar so to speak.

Whereas we the public are observing two heavy weights of the Liberal party battle it out for the leadership and have lost confidence in the two major parties. This gigantic struggle that is developing before our very eyes is a battle for this island continent we all call home - Australia and who will become the next Prime Minister. Kevin Rudd when he regained the leadership made it harder to remove leaders, but could not stop losing the election. People believe that the government should be looking at the economy and what is in the interests of Australia. Others believe it is time for a change but what that change is not known.

Tim Wilson stating on national television that "All" his Goldstein electorate have advised him that they are disgusted is an attempt at attracting attention to himself and raising his profile. He considers himself a front bench aspirant. While John Hewson on the other hand believes that people are advising him when all the stupidity is going to stop, sick and tired. He believes that Tony Abbott has led this push by working on Peter Dutton to consider going for the leadership and believes that he should resign.

Pauline Hanson of One nation is said to have voted with her feet on Tax cuts said that she looks at the legislation before making any decision and although she has no influence on Liberal party matters she strongly supports Peter Dutton. She went onto say that you only have to look at the last 38 polls lost by Malcolm Turnbull to understand the push behind Peter Dutton's thrust for leadership. One could say it was karma given that Malcolm Turnbull struck the first blow against his own leader, Tony Abbott.

Christopher Pyne, a long-time supporter of Malcolm Turnbull said recently that it was "business as usual", an odd thing to say. Was not he that was heavily involved as one of the co-conspirators that knifed Tony Abbot. It is alleged that Christopher Pyne has in the past has said that the Moderates have won control of the party and that they will lead without the right conservatives at the next election. An election that almost brought the Liberal party to its knees thus galvanising the right wing conservatives against the moderates. One begs the question whether the comments made by Christopher Pyne unified the conservative right wing of the Liberal Party to battle the moderates for control of the party.

Jeff Kennett a former Victorian Premier says that he is not confident that Dutton has the numbers and that the status quo should remain to main stability. Jeff Kennett some say has had his time in the spotlight, was a very successful Premier but ran afoul of the public when he decided to continue as Premier at a time when he should have stepped down.

Mark Latham a former Labor Party leader says if your opponent is cutting his throat don't get in between your opponent and the knife. He went onto say that should there could be a contest between Scott Morrison/Julie Bishop against Peter Dutton/Greg Hunt, he was of the belief that it would be a very close vote, but in the end Australians will have the final say at the next federal election.

Sarah Hanson Young said that Australia has had Seven Prime Ministers in ten years and that she does not support in any way Peter Dutton because of his tough stand on border control and immigration policies. Does this mean that she is of the opinion that the knives are out against Dutton. Had to say because she has no influence on Liberal party matters.

Bruce Hawker, Kevin Rudd's Political strategist stated recently that Peter Dutton is better prepared and Turnbull is entrenching himself using delay tactics, not making decisions until he can muster support to win back those who have turned against him or to give time for Scott Morrison to obtain the necessary support to win the leadership battle against Scott Morrison. This is seen by those in power that Malcolm Turnbull has indeed acknowledged privately at least to himself that he has lost the confidence of his party colleagues and the role of Prime Minister. Bruce Hawker is of the belief that Malcolm Turnbull has left his run too late.

Julie Bishop the alleged darling of the media it would appear to be hedging her bets on the outcome, knew of Peter Dutton's leadership aspirations last April but did not act upon those aspirations, which is a smart move on her part. She has been deputy to four leaders and a few within the Liberal party ranks are pushing for her to take up the challenge and seek the leadership mantle. They say that the litmus test for politicians is how often they are seen at by-elections helping candidates and that is why Julie Bishop is popular with some of the public.

However Julie Bishop despite her impressive qualifications does not have the numbers and is not considered as a good moderator to heal the left, the moderates and the right of the party. In other words Julie Bishop has been a bridesmaid four times but never the bride. In other corridors of power, she has been criticised for giving aid given to other nations at the expense of Australian farmers.

Scott Morrison has his core of supporters who believe he is less polarising than Dutton and feel that should Malcolm Turnbull step aside and throw his support behind Scott Morrison; he (Scott Morrison) will run with Julie Bishop as his deputy and Greg Hunt as Treasurer. This is an attempt to win over the right wing conservatives but given the chaos, delaying tactics of Malcolm Turnbull and demands to see the names of the 43 members will create a bitter taste in the supporters of Scott Morrison. Scott Morrison is a wily but respected member of the Liberal National Coalition but lacks the strength and courage required for the role of Prime Minister. He is a good and loyal ally who will look after his own interests when faced with political oblivion and will seek out others for support when the going gets tough.

Mathias Cormann is an enigma which reminds us of Gorton leaving Senate to become Prime Minister and then we ended up with Billy McMahon. Scott Morrison on the other hand will now be looking at counting the numbers to see where they all stack up but I fear that he will come short and fall in behind Peter Dutton to secure a position on the front bench. Some media commentators have indicated that maybe Mathias Cormann should also consider making a bid for the top job, but media commentators don't have a vote and their influence is negligible.

Peter Dutton is a very strong and tough performer and it is alleged that he has been advised to soften his image if he is to be considered Prime Ministerial material. Others believe it is time for a change and what that change is anyone's guess. A few insiders are concerned about Peter Dutton's affiliation with Tony Abbott and that it may tarnish his image. In the end many agree that the Liberal Party must heal the rifts within the factions before they can move forward towards winning government again. Peter Dutton has called Turnbull's attempts to discredit him as "spurious".

Turnbull on the other hand is fighting for his very survival, throwing caution to the wind and lashing out which is commensurate with a drowning man clutching at straws. Knowing that it is a secret ballot, he is confronting his colleagues, demanding who are the disloyal members and wants the names of those who want him removed. The public can come only one conclusion and that he wants the names in order to exact revenge against them in the future.

His threats that he would resign from his electorate causing a by-election, this may result in a general election rather than a by-election. His investigation against Peter Dutton to see if he is eligible to be a member of parliament, asking for advice from the Solicitor General on procedures and other rules of law are all delaying tactics. We have not seen this type of drama and upheaval since the days of Whitlam in 1975 that such advice was sought.

Malcolm Turnbull's attempts to the motion against him as a motion of no confidence is not going to help him. He wants to be seen as the peoples candidate and positioning himself to stand down and force a by-election. He has said that the public will be crying for an election which is seen as a cry out in the wilderness.

Our Australian society and culture has been eroded under his leadership. He is not a strong leader but merely a facilitator who finds solutions no matter the cost to others. He is a very intelligent, cunning, well read, travelled and wealthy egotist. It was expected that he would have imploded some two years ago but he surrounded himself with sycophants and self-seeking individuals who seek power and influence for their own hidden agendas. It is these same individuals who banded together to give Turnbull the numbers to topple Tony Abbott.

Under Turnbull the Liberal Party has come close to mirroring the Labor Party and today there is not much difference between the two. Australia cannot afford political or economic instability in a world that changes from one day to the next. Australia needs a strong leader that will unite Australia and give it a mission, an objective, an identity, a brand name of who we are today.

When he won the last election amidst the chaos that he caused, he had every opportunity to heal the Liberal party by bringing back into the front bench his two rivals, Tony Abbott and Kevin Andrews. Both men are considered to be tough and resilient performers that would have assisted in the healing process and uniting the Liberal party. His "Captains call" on the Great Barrier Reef foundation was a public "no no", his poor response to the plight of Australian Farmers did not go down well, In these matters amongst others he was an abysmal failure.

However to give credit where its due, Turnbull has been at the helm for the many changes that some say are defining Australia today. Despite Malcolm Turnbull borrowing heavily to support his policies, the economy is doing well, he has supported the LGBTQI public survey, fought against racism, succeeded in bringing in new blood to the cabinet and donated \$2,000,000.00 of his own money pay for the political advertisements at the last election.

If Malcolm Turnbull takes the long view and steps aside, something that his ego will not allow him, he will be remembered kindly by a forgiving public for putting the interests of Australia first.

A senior Victorian Liberal today pointed out that Peter Dutton's expression of interest for the leadership was on the cards for some time and that many of Victorian diverse communities have thrown their weight behind Peter Dutton. That is not to say that Scott Morrison could not deliver the same goods.

National Party members such as Barnaby Joyce have been alleged to have a far more mature approach, stating that the current leadership battle is a matter for the Liberals, and that the interests of Australia, Australians, the economy and security of its people must come first before party politics.

Wise words indeed from a member that was once castigated publicly by Malcolm Turnbull. On the other hand some National Party members have threatened to go over to the cross benches' if Peter Dutton became the leader of the Liberal/National Coalition. Such threats are hardly the sign of a unified coalition and play into the hands of Bill Shorten and his union controlled Labor Party.

Conclusion. Over the next few days the media will focus on the leadership abilities, political experience, qualifications of all the players involved and question their past performances. It is a brutal process where there can only be one winner and that winner must have the support of all members if the newly elected leader is to win the next election. Having said this is a clear indication that Malcolm Turnbull is in fact “a dead man walking”.

Given the pace of events, the above opinions will soon be out of date. The public despite their anger must remember that we are merely revisiting a scenario played out many times in the past. It matters little that Malcolm Turnbull refuses to resign until he has sighted the motion against him as he now prepares for a spill for the leadership in the party room on Friday 23 August 2018. What is certain is that we the public are demanding leadership not chaos and uncertainty that Malcolm Turnbull was producing.



Peter Adamis is a Journalist/Social Media Commentator and writer. He is a retired Australian military serviceman and an Industry organisational & Occupational (OHS) & Training Consultant whose interests are within the parameters of domestic and international political spectrum. He is an avid blogger and contributes to domestic and international community news media outlets as well as to local and Ethnic News. He holds a Bachelor of Adult Learning & Development (Monash), Grad Dip Occupational Health & Safety, (Monash), and Dip. Training & Assessment, Dip Public Administration, and Dip Frontline Management. Website: abalinx.com Contact via Email: abalinx@gmail.com