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Haneef's chat room secrets

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Neale Maynard and AAP

July 31, 2007 05:55pm

AN internet chat room conversation made authorities highly suspicious Mohammed Haneef may have been aware of UK terror attacks before they happened, it was revealed late today.

Immigration Minister Kevin Andrews gave details of previously secret reasons for refusing to reinstate Dr Haneef's visa, despite a charge of supporting terrorism being withdrawn.

"Importantly, there was a computer room conversation, a chat room conversation, with Dr Haneef's brother in India on the afternoon before his attempted hasty departure from Australia," he said.

"In it, the brother of (Dr) Haneef says 'nothing has been found out about you' and asked when Dr Haneef would be getting out, to which (Dr) Haneef replied 'today'.

"The brother asked whether he had permission to take leave and what he told the (Gold Coast) hospital.

"Dr Haneef said he told them his baby was born in an emergency caesarean. The brother told him to tell them that you have to as you have a daughter born, do not tell them anything else'.

"The brother then said not to delay his departure and not to let anyone else use his number in Australia, nor to give it to anyone.

"The brother added that 'auntie' told him that brother Kafeel used it in some sort of project over there," Mr Andrews said, in a reference to UK bombing accused Kafeel Ahmed.

Mr Andrews said the AFP had told him before making his visa decision that police suspected the internet conversation may be evidence Dr Haneef had prior knowledge of the UK bomb plot.

"And secondly, the AFP consider Dr Haneef's attempted urgent departure from Australia on a one-way ticket for a purpose which appears to be a false pretext to be highly suspicious and may reflect Haneef's awareness of the conspiracy to plan and prepare the acts of terrorism in London and Glasgow.

"The suspicion which the federal police referred to in terms of Dr Haneef was that he was wanting to get out of Australia not because of the reason proffered, namely that the child had been born - remembering that that child had been born I think six days earlier.

"That that was a pretext, a false pretext, on which he was wanting to get out of Australia because of his association with the Ahmed brothers, the cousins, and the incidents which had occurred in the UK."

Mr Andrews said Dr Haneef had not applied for leave from the hospital until after he had received two phone calls, including one from India, in which he was told there was an issue with his SIM card.

"The whole circumstances surrounding Haneef's attempted hasty departure from Australia, including chat room conversations, when viewed against his clear prior association with the Ahmed brothers, led me to form a reasonable suspicion as required by the migration legislation," Mr Andrews said.

"I received information from the Australian Federal Police regarding Dr Haneef and I cancelled his visa in the national interest based on that advice.

"I will continue to put the security and safety of Australians first in relation to this matter."

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