

Senate F&PA Committee

Tabled Document

Inquiry: SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 19/20

Date/Time: 21/10/2019; 6:37PM

Witness Name: SENATOR KIMBERLEY
KITCHING

Organisation:

Question on notice no. 90

Portfolio question number: BE19/091

2019-20 Budget estimates

Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Home Affairs Portfolio

Senator Murray Watt: asked the Australian Federal Police on 4 April 2019—

Senator WATT asked

1.Senator WATT: We're all conscious of time and we are very keen to get to ASIO before six o'clock, because there are some important issues there. We will see how we go. Commissioner, I've got some questions about media coverage beginning with an article in the Herald Sun dated 21 December 2018. That article, which I'm assuming you've seen, revealed that the AFP had investigated a federal government MP's travel to the Philippines. Are you familiar with that article?

Senator WATT: What date did that evaluation commence?

Mr Colvin: I'd have to take that on notice, Senator. It was in the first half of 2017, but I don't know the exact dates.

2.Senator WATT: Commissioner, is it correct, as is reported, that you briefed the Secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet regarding your evaluation or these concerns?

Mr Colvin: I briefed the Secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet in relation to the allegations and the fact that we were making an evaluation of that information.

Senator WATT: One of the articles I've seen said that occurred in September 2017. Is that correct?

Mr Colvin: I'd have to check the exact date, but it's around that time.

3.Mr Colvin: I or my officers have not briefed the current Prime Minister on this matter.

Senator WATT: Or the current Deputy Prime Minister?

Mr Colvin: No. I have briefed the current Deputy Prime Minister, yes.

Senator WATT: What date did that occur?

Mr Colvin: I'd have to check the dates, Senator.

4.Senator WATT: Did you at any point brief the former Prime Minister, Mr Turnbull?

Mr Colvin: Yes, I did.

Senator WATT: How many occasions?

Mr Colvin: I would have to take that on notice, Senator.

5. Senator WATT: Okay. And how many times did you brief former Deputy Prime Minister Mr Joyce?

Mr Colvin: One occasion.

Senator WATT: Do you happen to know the date?

Mr Colvin: No, I don't.

Senator WATT: Could you take that on notice?

Mr Colvin: I can.

6. Senator WATT: Do you know roughly when that was? Are we talking the second half of 2017?

Mr Colvin: I'd be guessing, so I'll take it on notice.

7. Senator WATT: Commissioner, just at the end of the last questions, I think you said that you had briefed Minister Dutton about the evaluation in relation to Mr Christensen. How many times did that occur?

Mr Colvin: It occurred on one occasion.

Senator WATT: Once. Do you know roughly when?

Mr Colvin: I would have to take it on notice. It was much later. I say that because the judgements that I had to make about when and who to brief were not easy judgements, as you can understand. This was a very unusual circumstance which we were dealing with, and I necessarily treaded very carefully. The briefing to Minister Dutton, as my minister, was far later in the evaluation.

8. Senator WATT: Sorry. Was there any evidence that the MP involved became aware of the AFP evaluation outside of any contact the AFP may have had with that individual?

Mr Colvin: I don't know. I will take that on notice.

Answer —

1. Evaluation commenced in early 2017
2. 7 September 2017
3. At this stage the AFP cannot provide the date of this briefing
4. Six occasions
5. 7 December 2017
6. 7 December 2017
7. 28 March 2018
8. This would be a matter for the MP.