

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates Hearing 26 May- 5 June 2014

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

**Department/Agency:** Office of the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security

**Outcome/Program:** Outcome 1

**Topic:** Pine Gap

**Senator:** Xenophon

**Question reference number:** 168

**Type of question:** Written

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 11 July 2014

**Number of pages:** 1

**Question:**

1. The Australian-United States joint facility Pine Gap has been used to gather information in at least one US drone strike in the Middle East in 2002, according to a report The Australian on 20 May:

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/policy/pine-gap-supports-us-drone-hits/story-e6frg8yo-1226923350422>

The story contains expert opinion and circumstantial evidence that Pine Gap has been extensively used to gather telephone intercepts and other signal intelligence utilized to target US drones against suspected terrorists in the Middle East and other countries.

Is Pine Gap used to gather information used to target US predator drones against suspected terrorists?

2. Was Pine Gap used to provide signal intelligence used to target a US drone that struck a convoy in Yemen containing senior al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsular (AQAP) figure Abu Habib al Yemeni in November last year? The strike reportedly killed al Yemeni and a number of others including two Australian citizens, Christopher Havard from Queensland and New Zealand dual national "Muslim bin John", birth name Darryl Jones.
3. In terms of what Pine Gap does - controls the four 'SIGINT' satellites, known as DEF-R-SAT-1A (Defence Research Satellite 1A), DEF-R-SAT 2A, DEF-R-SAT 3A and DEF-R-SAT 4B. Is it true that these satellites are being used to supply location information and phone conversation content used to tell US drone operators where to target their strikes, including the November 2013 strike referred to in Question 2?
4. Is there a division of labour or any procedures that shield Australian personnel from being involved in such work?

**Answer:**

The IGIS does not comment on specific operational matters. All questions regarding the operation of Pine Gap (JDFPG) should be directed to the Minister for Defence.

OIGIS staff periodically receive briefings about JDFPG and conduct inspections at the facility. The most recent inspection, conducted in May 2013, found that the facility has well-developed systems and procedures in place for managing compliance.