

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**Supplementary Budget Estimates 20-24 October 2014**

**Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio**

**Department/Agency:** Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet  
**Outcome/Program:** Outcome 1: Prime Minister and Cabinet  
**Topic:** Date of US request for ADF capabilities

**Senator:** Senator the Hon John Faulkner

**Question reference number:** 15

**Type of question:** FPA Monday 20 October 2014, pages 134 and 135

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 5 December 2014

**Number of pages:** 2

**Question:**

Senator WONG: I will put this to you and if you feel you need to look at the statement please do so. This is the statement in which the Prime Minister announces Australia's contribution to the international coalition against ISIL. In that statement, the Prime Minister says:

The Government's decision responds to a formal request from the Government of the United States to contribute specific Australian Defence Force capabilities to the international coalition.

I want first to ask about that formal request. When was that formal request received and in what form?

Dr McCarthy: The request was in the form of a letter. I do not think I have the date with me. Let me check.....

Senator WONG: Is the letter classified? I do not want to ask for it if it is—that is all.

Dr McCarthy: I would need to check the classification of the letter. We do not have it with us, sorry.

Senator FAULKNER: Would you mind taking that on notice as well as the date? Perhaps you could provide as much information as you can about the letter, including the addressee and so forth.

Dr McCarthy: Yes, Senator.

Senator FAULKNER: Understanding that there might be a security classification issue, you might take on notice to check with the Prime Minister as to whether that letter could be tabled. That might be a sensible way of us saving a little time.

Senator Abetz: I have just been advised that I advised the Senate, that I provided the date of 13 September on the Hansard when I answered Senator Wong's question. I recall that I came back into the Senate after question time and provided that information—that is, 13

September, on the advice we have been given thus far. If that needs to be corrected, of course we will come back as a matter of urgency.

Senator FAULKNER: Minister, you might take on notice the other elements that I mentioned to Ms McCarthy.

Senator Abetz: Yes, absolutely.

Senator WONG: You will take on notice whether or not there is a security classification associated with this and, if not, I am asking that it be tabled.

Dr McCarthy: Yes, Senator

**Answer:**

The letter from the United States Secretary of Defense, Chuck Hagel, to the Minister for Defence, Senator the Hon David Johnston, dated 12 September 2014, was received by our Post in Washington on the same day. It was transmitted to Canberra by our Post in Washington in a classified cable received on 13 September 2014.

Publication of the letter could be prejudicial to Australia's international relations and therefore it should not be tabled.