

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2011-2012

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
Outcome/Program: 1.1.2 - National Security and International Policy
Topic: Speech to the Luncheon in honour of the Prime Minister of Malaysia

Senator: Trood

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Number of pages: 2

Question:

Senator TROOD: Another matter of policy, Mr Lewis; did you have a hand in preparing the Prime Minister's speech at the official lunch here at Parliament House before the Malaysian Prime Minister?

Mr Lewis: I did read it. I will just check. Yes, I am just advised that we did prepare a first draft of that speech. That is fairly typical of speech preparation for the Prime Minister's speeches, wherein we will prepare a draft, send it to the office and then—

Senator TROOD: So your office was responsible for the draft of the speech?

Mr Lewis: That is correct. We presented to the office of the Prime Minister a first draft of that speech.

...

Senator TROOD: I would like that document, the draft of the document to be presented to the committee, please.

Senator Chris Evans: We will take it on notice. I am not sure that that is appropriate. I am not undertaking to provide that. It would be unusual for drafts of speeches to be made available so that one could track changes made in the Prime Minister's speech as a result of various departmental or speech writer input. I will take advice on whether that has been past practice. I think Mr Lewis has made it clear there was an error in the speech, and he is not aware of the source of that. I am not sure we will be able to provide you with various iterations of the speech preparation.

Senator TROOD: I press my request that the draft of the speech be provided.

Senator Chris Evans: I am taking that on notice.

Senator TROOD: You know the rules, you know the basis on which you will have to find some reason not to provide the document. I cannot for the life of me see that—

Senator Chris Evans: I am happy to have that debate with you, but I have taken on notice your request.

Senator TROOD: Thank you.

Senator Chris Evans: I am just indicating to you it would not be my inclination to provide it but I will take advice on it.

...

Mr Lewis: My responsibility is to give advice to the Prime Minister. We provided a draft speech. What happens in terms of the delivery of that speech is not something for which I can account, other than the content of the draft. As the minister has said, we will need to check whether in fact that draft is something that can in fact be released. It is a draft deliberative document, a working document.

...

Senator TROOD: ... You have that on notice. I would be grateful if you could get back to me when you can about that.

Answer:

It is not proposed to release draft speaking notes prepared for the Prime Minister as they are developed iteratively.