

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates Hearing 21-24 May 2012

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

**Department/Agency:** Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

**Outcome/Program:** 1.1.2 National Security and International Policy

**Topic:** Briefings to the PM - Stratfor, Julian Assange, Wikileaks

**Senator:** Senator Ludlam

**Question reference number:** 27

**Type of Question:** FPA P10, 22 May 2012

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 6 July 2012

**Number of pages:** 2

**Question:**

Senator LUDLAM: I will just put a couple of questions on notice if I may. They relate again to briefings that the Prime Minister received on a couple of events. I am just going to put to you what those events were, and I will ask you to take on notice whether or not the Prime Minister received written briefings on those events, if that is okay. Then I will pass you back to the chair. Was the PM briefed when the communications by the US private intelligence corporation Stratfor were released, which had information that revealed a grand jury indictment existed for Julian Assange? I would be keen to know whether the Prime Minister was briefed on that. When was the Prime Minister last briefed on the UK Supreme Court matters that are afoot at the moment, on which a judgment is expected fairly soon, and what form did that briefing take? Has the Prime Minister been briefed on the impact of the banking blockade against WikiLeaks by Australian banks and their customers and have her comments on the illegality of the work of WikiLeaks had any material bearing on that banking blockade?

Finally, in response to my question on notice about whether the Prime Minister had apologised to WikiLeaks for declaring their activities illegal, the response to me was that the department of the Prime Minister is not able to speculate on this matter. Clearly there has been a misunderstanding there; I was not asking for speculation, I was asking whether the Prime Minister will apologise for those comments. I will leave it there.

**Answer:** The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) provided briefing to the Prime Minister on the release of communications by the Stratfor organisation by WikiLeaks on 2 March 2012.

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PM&C last provided briefing to the Prime Minister on Mr Julian Assange's appeal to the United Kingdom Supreme Court against his extradition to Sweden on 31 May 2012. This was a standard ministerial briefing. At the time of the Budget Estimates hearing on 22 May 2012, PM&C had last provided briefing to the Prime Minister on this matter on 17 February 2011. This was a standard ministerial briefing.

PM&C has not briefed the Prime Minister on a "banking blockade". PM&C does not comment on any comments of the Prime Minister.

Please refer to the response to Question on Notice 47 from the Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio Additional Estimates of 13 February 2012. PM&C has nothing further to add to this answer.