

Defence Portfolio

COMMITTEE INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No.24)

Senator Kimberley Kitching asked the Department of Defence, upon notice, on 15 October 2021:

Senator Kimberley Kitching: Is Don Winter still a special advisor to the Prime Minister?

Mead: I'll have to take that on notice, Senator.

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the Senator's question:

This is a matter for the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Defence Portfolio

COMMITTEE INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No.25)

Senator Kimberley Kitching asked the Department of Defence, upon notice, on 15 October 2021:

Senator Kimberley Kitching: Could you also take on notice in that regard, if he's (Don Winter) still being paid \$6000 per day as reported in the Guardian?

Mead: I'll take that on notice, Senator.

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the Senator's question:

This is a matter for the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Defence Portfolio

COMMITTEE INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No.26)

Senator Kimberley Kitching asked the Department of Defence, upon notice, on 15 October 2021:

Senator Kimberley Kitching: Now can I just go back to Mr Turnbull and the Submarine Advisory Committee, so I think you said yes it was created in 2017? Was it created in 2017 then?

Mead: I didn't say that, Senator, I didn't say that at all. I don't know, and I'll need to take that question on notice.

Senator Kimberley Kitching – The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the Senator's question:

Yes.

COMMITTEE INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 30)

Senator Kimberley Kitching asked the Department of Defence, upon notice, on 15 October 2021:

Senator Kimberley Kitching: Christopher Pyne, on 21 September 2021 gave evidence to the UK Defence Committee's inquiry into the Navy, for procurement, and he stated, and I quote: "Prime Minister has indicated that he started to tell Prime Minister Macron that our military capability needs might be changing, which might require us to think differently about conventional submarines versus other capabilities, which is different than being concerned about the program", did the Prime Minister indicate to Prime Minister Macron that our military capability needs might be changing, and if so, when did that happen?

Fraser: Senator, Admiral Mead will assist you but we'll take that on notice, and get back to you.

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the Senator's question:

As the Prime Minister stated on 23 September 2021, he had "already been engaged with the French going back to the middle of June, making it very clear that Australia had very big concerns about the capability of the conventional submarine and its ability to meet the strategic environment that Australia would have to operate in."

COMMITTEE INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 31)

Senator Kimberley Kitching asked the Department of Defence, upon notice, on 15 October 2021:

Senator Kimberley Kitching: Christopher Pyne also said on the 21st September this year gave evidence to the UK Defence Committee, and I quote: “That only changed because of the offering from the United States at the request of Mr Morrison as to whether it would consider sharing the 33 year nuclear life reactor but does not require a civil nuclear industry to sustain and maintain it”
When did the Prime Minister make this request to the United States?

Fraser: I’ll take that on notice. I can’t answer on behalf of Mr Pyne, but we’ll certainly provide you the Government level information.

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the Senator’s question:

As the Chief of the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Task Force, Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead said at the Senate Estimates References Committee on Shipbuilding on 15 October 2021, he led a small team from February through to September 2021, undertaking a classified Defence Capability Enhancement Review. This review included consultation with the United States and United Kingdom.

The trilateral leaders meeting in Cornwall in June 2021 confirmed US and UK support for the AUKUS concept and for further work on Australia acquiring nuclear-powered submarines.