



## **Submission No. 3**

### **Review of Portfolio Annual Reports**

Organisation: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Address: R G Casey Building  
BARTON ACT 0221



**FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS AND  
TRADE**

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Public Diplomacy, Consular and  
Passports Division

8 August 2002

Mr Cliff Lawson  
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade  
R-1-120  
Department of the House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

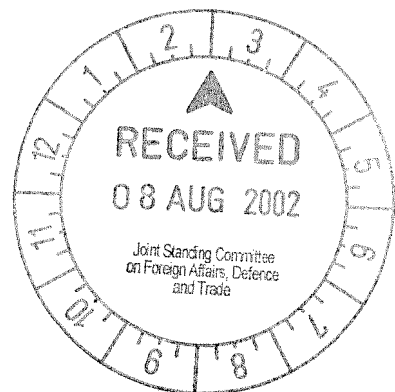
Dear Mr Lawson

**Hearing into the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Annual Report, 21 May  
2002**

Attached are answers to the questions asked on notice at the above hearing, approved by the  
Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Yours sincerely

Douglas Foskett  
Parliamentary Liaison Section



JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

(FOREIGN AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE)

**Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio – review of annual reports**

Tuesday 21 May 2002

Question 1

Topic: Tourist arrivals from Persian Gulf countries

Hansard page 11

Mr Jull asked:

What are the approximate figures for tourist arrivals from the Persian Gulf this year?

Answer:

The Australian Tourist Commission has advised the following:

- Tourist arrivals from the Persian Gulf are very hard to forecast as it is a “last minute market” so that there are few advance bookings to provide a guide to visitor arrivals.
- The market is very seasonal, with the high season beginning in late June/early July. This means that the recent monthly arrivals data are not necessarily a good guide to annual trends.
- Qantas is confident that the coming tourist season will be good, but other operators are less confident.
- Industry estimates that tourist arrivals from the UAE could be down 20 per cent in 2001 (year on year) were unduly pessimistic, though tourist arrivals were lower than in 2000.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

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Tuesday 21 May 2002

Question 2

Topic: Policy guidance on meetings with the Dalai Lama

Hansard page 28

Senator Schacht asked:

Is it true that in about the last two years the government sent out a policy to all ambassadors around the world that they could not attend meetings of the Dalai Lama when he visited whatever country it may be, unless it was an absolute and total religious meeting? For anything that implied political activity, our ambassadors and embassy staff were told not to attend.

Answer:

The Department has guidelines on official Australian contact with representatives of foreign states, political entities or organisations where special considerations are involved. This includes entities which the Australian Government does not recognise, such as the Tibetan government-in-exile. These guidelines make clear that advice relating to requests for formal contact with Tibetan groups or representatives will be provided on a case-by-case basis, and that any informal contact that may occur should be limited and reported to DFAT. There is no general injunction against attendance at functions at which the Dalai Lama is present.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

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Tuesday 21 May 2002

Question 3

Topic: Human rights of the Uighurs in western China

Hansard page 31

Mr Laurie Ferguson asked:

Referring to reports that the Chinese authorities are using international terror concerns to allege that Al-Qaeda and other groups have been involved with the Uighurs in western China, to what extent is Australia aware of changes by the Chinese authorities in their treatment of the regions, and overall clampdowns under the pretext of security concerns about international terrorism?

Answer:

Since the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, Chinese authorities have been more open about their efforts to control what they perceive as separatist and religious extremist activities by individuals and groups in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. China has sought to identify certain groups in Xinjiang as having close ties with international terrorist organisations. Chinese authorities have referred publicly to a crackdown against these groups which they claim are engaged in terrorist activities. By its own admission China has introduced enhanced measures, including revised criminal legislation, to control what they refer to as terrorist forces in China.

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Tuesday 21 May 2002

Question 4

Topic: Pakistan elections

Hansard page 45

Mr Baird asked:

Are Ahmadis being excluded from participating in the national elections due to be held in Pakistan in October 2002?

Answer:

Ahmadis can participate in the elections, both as voters and candidates, on the same basis as other Pakistanis. However, as declared non-Muslims, Ahmadis, like Christians, Hindus, Parsis and other non-Muslims, are not eligible to become the President of Pakistan.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

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Tuesday 21 May 2002

Question 5

Topic: Human rights – Islamic law.

Hansard page 50

Senator Schacht asked:

How many representations has Australia made about our concern about the implementation of Islamic law that led to the death penalty, imprisonment, mistreatment or other abuses of human rights?

Answer:

Over the last three years, Australia has made fourteen such representations.

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Tuesday 21 May 2002

Question 6

Topic: Travellers' Emergency Loans

Hansard page 58

Mr Edwards asked:

- (1) Of the \$121,000 lent out under the Travellers' Emergency Loans provisions during 2000-01, how much does the department expect to recover?
- (2) What is the figure for outstanding loans over the last five years?

Answer:

- (1) The department advances emergency loans on the basis of travellers' needs. The department expects all travellers' emergency loans to be repaid in full and uses all means available to encourage repayment.
- (2) The outstanding figure not repaid over the last three years for travellers' emergency loans is \$90,309.66. This represents 23% of the total amount of funds provided in that period. Data for further years is archived and would require substantial action to obtain.



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Question 7

Topic: Refugees in Indonesia

Hansard page 60

Mr Baird asked:

Can the department provide an estimate of the number of refugees in Indonesia at the moment?

Answer:

The precise number of refugees currently in Indonesia is not known.

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Tuesday 21 May 2002

Question 8

Topic: Internally Displaced Persons in west Timor

Hansard page 62

Senator Schacht asked:

- (1) Can Australia, either directly through AusAID or DFAT, or with the sponsoring of some Australian NGOs, get regular access to the internally displaced people in camps in west Timor?
- (2) Did any of those agencies go to the camps specifically?

Answer:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Embassy officials have visited IDP camps on numerous occasions.

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Question 9

Topic: Electoral system in Papua New Guinea

Hansard page 73

*Schaich*

Senator ~~Faulkner~~ asked:

Could the department provide information about the electoral system in Papua New Guinea?

Answer:

The following documents are provided:

- The Constitution of Papua New Guinea, including the relevant constitutional amendments dealing with the Integrity provisions;
- The Organic Law on the Integrity of Political Parties;
- The Organic Law on National and Local-Level Government Elections
- Amendments to incorporate the preferential voting system into the Organic Law on National and Local-Level Government Elections.

Owing to their size, the attachments for Question 9 have not been re-printed

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Question 10

Topic: Human rights in Vietnam

Hansard page 84

Mr Edwards asked:

What is happening with the Montagnard people who are stranded in camps in Thailand?

Answer:

There are no Montagnard people from Vietnam in camps in Thailand.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

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Question 11

Topic: RSL official visit to Vietnam

Hansard page 84

Mr Edwards asked:

I understand the national president of the RSL has written to some ministers, including the Minister for Veterans Affairs, about an official visit to Vietnam. Can you please tell me where that is at the moment?

Answer:

This question is best directed to the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

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Question 12

Topic: Ethnic minorities in Vietnam

Hansard page 84

Mr Edwards asked:

Are some of the smaller indigenous populations in Vietnam getting a fair go now or are they still being persecuted?

Answer:

Ethnic minorities in Vietnam continue to experience discrimination and restrictions of their human rights from both central government policy and local authorities. Australia makes regular representations on the recognition of their rights by the central government through our Embassy in Hanoi, along with representations to the Vietnam Embassy here in Canberra.

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Question 13

Topic: The Long Tan Cross

Hansard page 85

Senator Schacht asked:

Has there been any indication in any discussion in recent times between the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Vietnamese government about sharing the cross so it could spend half a year or a year in Australia and half a year or a year in Vietnam, or about providing some other assistance to the local village? Has there been any follow-up or ongoing discussion?

Answer:

This matter is being handled by the Department of Veterans Affairs, which advises that no current agreement exists on sharing the Long Tan Cross.

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Question 14

Topic: Defence cooperation with Vietnam

Hansard page 85

Senator Schacht asked:

Can the Department provide some detail on the level of defence cooperation with Vietnam?

Answer:

This question is best directed to the Department of Defence.



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Question 15

Topic: Size of Vietnam's armed forces

Hansard page 86

Senator Schacht asked:

What is the size of Vietnam's armed forces? Has the army demobilized large numbers or is it still a significant force?

Answer:

Vietnam's armed forces are:

Army	450,000
Navy	42,000 (includes 27,000 Naval Infantry)
Air Force	15,000
Reserves / Militia	3,000,000 (This number is persons classed as able bodied and not necessarily armed.)

These figures indicate a significant demobilisation in Vietnam's force size.