

Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Additional Estimates 23-27 February 2009

Question: PM26

Outcome 1, Output 3

Topic: Global financial crisis - security implications

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Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 9 April

Mr Campbell-I am not suggesting that the implications of the global financial crisis are unpredictable in toto, but rather that at this time in the sequence of its unfolding I am not of a view with respect to the security implications-which, typically, and with regard to the Great Depression, unfold over slightly longer time frames-that appropriate policy judgments are now available to offer. But I do agree with your general premise that they will emerge. What we are now seeing are the obvious and immediate first-order and typically financial, economic and social impacts arising, but the geostrategic factors take a little longer to unfold. I think what is worse than a considered piece of advice on those sorts of issues is early or illconsidered-

Senator TROOD-It seems to me that as much information as can be gathered on this potentially perilous situation is an objective that perhaps should recommend itself to your office.

Mr A Campbell-I agree.

Senator TROOD-On that point, are you aware of the intelligence agencies doing any work in this field? I am unable to ask ONA obviously.

Mr A Campbell-I am not comfortable discussing intelligence issues and, as I have not prepared with regard to what the protocols are on discussing those sorts of tasking activities, I would request that that question might be taken on notice for the Director-General, ONA.

Senator TROOD-I am happy for you to take it on notice. Can you respond to this then: have you asked any of the intelligence agencies to investigate these matters?

Answer: ONA will respond to the first part of the question. In answer to the second part of the question, the Office of National Security contributes to tasking intelligence agencies and receives a wide range of intelligence products on matters of intent to Australia. It is not appropriate to discuss the details of that tasking or the subject matter of the classified intelligence received.