

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Budget Estimates Hearings 2006-2007, 22-23 May 2006

Question: PM 10

Outcome 1, Output 3.1

Topic: UN Oil-For-Food Programme investigation

Hansard Page: F&PA 93:

Senator Faulkner asked: Please find out for me when the Prime Minister first became aware of that investigation. Can you also take on notice for me what action the department took after it became aware of the investigation. Can you also indicate to me when the department became aware of the fact that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade instructions were given to Washington about the inquiry—you might find that out for me. Please find out for me on how many occasions the Prime Minister spoke to Mr Thawley about this matter. I specifically want chased through the matter you have already taken on notice about the Prime Minister speaking to Mr Thawley in September and October 2004. You might also inform me, in relation to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, if there was any involvement of the department and any other agencies in relation to the US Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations inquiries into the AWB. I would appreciate all those matters being taken on notice. It is very disappointing that there is no-one from the department that is apparently able to answer those questions.

Answer:

The Government acted promptly to establish an open and transparent inquiry into Australian companies named in the United Nations Independent Inquiry Committee final report. The Government has cooperated fully with the Inquiry. It would not be appropriate to answer questions relating to matters before the *Inquiry into certain Australian companies in relation to the UN Oil-for-Food Programme* while the Inquiry is underway.