



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Assange, Mr Julian

QUESTION

Thursday, 31 May 2012

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Date Thursday, 31 May 2012
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Questioner Bandt, Adam, MP
Speaker

Source House
Proof No
Responder Gillard, Julia, MP
Question No.

Assange, Mr Julian

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Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (14:34): My question is to the Prime Minister. Senior figures in the United States have called for Julian Assange to be hunted down and in the US courts he may face the death penalty. Has the government sought an assurance from the United States that he will not be prosecuted. What steps has the government taken, or will the government take, to prevent Julian Assange being taken to the United States? Will the government put the interests of Washington ahead of the liberty of an Australian citizen and the freedom of the press?

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (14:35): I thank the member for Melbourne for his question. I know that he is raising an issue that is on the minds of many Australians as result of the recent news about the decision in the UK on the extradition matter involving Mr Assange. Can I assure the House of the following: the Australian government is providing full consular assistance to Mr Assange, as it does for all Australian citizens. I am advised that Australian consular officials visited Mr Assange on a number of occasions during his period of detention in London and raised several matters of concern with prison authorities on his behalf. Australian consular officials have attended all of Mr Assange's court appearances, including yesterday's hearing.

Since Mr Assange was released on bail, Australian officials have repeatedly conveyed offers of consular assistance through his lawyers, with whom they were most recently in contact yesterday. Swedish authorities have confirmed that any legal action against Mr Assange will be conducted in accordance with due process. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs has said today, at this stage we do not have any advice from the United States that there is an indictment against Mr Assange or that the United States has decided to seek his extradition. If at any stage in the future Mr Assange faces legal proceedings from the United States we would, for Mr Assange—as we would for any other Australian citizen—seek assurances from the United States in relation to due process. The Australian government cannot interfere in the judicial processes of other countries, but of course we will continue to closely monitor proceedings against Mr Assange and continue to provide full consular assistance to him.