

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION SERVICE

Question No. 36

Senator Brandis asked the following question at the hearing on 18 October 2011:

Senator BRANDIS: ... Was there a time line as well between the point at which you understood the [October 2009] vessel to be in distress and the point at which your best information was that the vessel was no longer in distress and had resumed its journey? In other words, how many hours after the report that the vessel was in distress was the last real-time evidence that you had that it was continuing to undertake its journey?

Mr Pezzullo: I will correct the record if required but, as I recall it, it all transpired within a matter of hours.

Senator BRANDIS: Within a matter of hours. Okay. And, at the time the vessel was believed to be in distress, was it in international waters?

Mr Pezzullo: I would have to take that on notice. In terms of the possible coordinates, which were not precise, not down to seconds in terms of latitude and longitude, I would have to take that on notice; but it certainly was, because of the AMSA referral process, in Indonesia's search and rescue zone.

Senator BRANDIS: It was in the Indonesian search and rescue zone, and it may or may not have been in international waters.

Mr Pezzullo: Whether it was in their contiguous zone or just outside, I just do not recall.

Senator BRANDIS: That is fine.

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

On the basis of the incomplete coordinates provided, analysis indicates that the vessel was in an area just outside the Indonesian Territorial Sea, and inside the Indonesian Exclusive Economic Zone. Based on the advised coordinates, the vessel in distress was within Indonesia's Search and Rescue Region (SRR). The Indonesian Search and Rescue Authority, BASARNAS, has responsibility for coordination of the search and rescue responses within the Indonesian SRR.