

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 27 February 2017

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(AE17/008) - Resettlement timeline - Programme 1.5: IMA Offshore Management

Senator McKim, Nick (L&CA 22) asked:

Senator McKIM: But you see, that is not what Mr Dutton said, and it is not what you said a moment ago. I will just refer you back to Minister Dutton's direct quote: '... we'll have movement in the not too distant future ... in the next couple of months'. He was asked about people being resettled, not movement in a particular direction but specifically about people being resettled in the US. You have backed his statement this morning. So my question is very simple, and I will repeat it: what advice are you relying on?

Mr Pezzullo: In relation to what?

Senator McKIM: In relation to Minister Dutton's statement and you backing his statement this morning—what advice from whom in the US government are you relying on?

Mr Pezzullo: That there will be movement in the next few months?

Senator McKIM: Yes—resettlement, in the next couple of months.

Mr Pezzullo: I would want to refresh myself as to what the transcript of that interview actually says, and I might confer with the minister in the meantime.

Senator McKIM: Unless you are alleging that I am inaccurately quoting him, I will read it to you again. He was asked about when people will commence resettlement in the US. So, this does not go to the process; it goes to the actual, physical movement of people: 'we'll have movement in the not too distant future'.

CHAIR: I think the secretary has wisely said that he will take it on notice.

Answer:

The US has agreed to consider resettlement of refugees in Nauru and Papua New Guinea (PNG) who have been endorsed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for referral to the existing US Refugee Admissions Program.

The orderly resettlement of refugees from regional processing countries will take time and will not be rushed.

All refugees considered for resettlement to the US under this arrangement are subject to standard US screening processes.

The US will conduct their own assessment of refugees according to US processes in place at the time.

The Department is working closely with relevant US authorities to facilitate these assessments.

As Minister Dutton said (during an interview with Andrew Bolt on Sky News on 21 February 2017), we *“have a very good relationship”* with US Department of State and Department of Homeland Security and continue to work closely with them to process cases *“as quickly as possible.”*