

Question W56

Operation Relex

Senator Milne

- a) How many border protection surveillance flights per day were conducted in Search Area Charlie under Operation Relex between 3 September 2001 and 31 October 2001? Please give actual numbers for each day between these dates for both helicopter and P3 Orions.
- b) Was helicopter surveillance of the southern half of Search Area Charlie under Operation Relex a daily event or was it initiated only when intelligence suggested that a SIEV departure was imminent or had already taken place?
- c) Prior to the creation of Search Area Charlie on 12 October 2001, was aerial surveillance of that area of ocean undertaken by P3 Orions on a daily basis between the creation of Operation Relex on 3 September 2001 and 11 October 2001. If not, how often were Orion surveillance flights undertaken in that area under Operation Relex during that time? How many Orion surveillance flights were undertaken by Operation Relex in that area during that time?
- d) Between 1 January 1999 and 25 August 2001 - that is prior to the rescue of KM Palapa 1 by the MV Tampa in August 2001 - to your knowledge how many suspected illegal entry vessels had required rescue by Australian agencies?
 - i. How many had been the subject of a broadcast to shipping? Please give details.
- e) To your knowledge how many suspected illegal entry vessels have sunk en route to Australia? Please give details of dates, vessels and passenger numbers if known.
- f) Was your Department or any of its agencies informed that the location of the rescue of SIEV X survivors was reported to be 07 40 00S / 105 09 00E? If so by whom was this information provided? On what date? Please provide copies of any file notes and other documents related to this information being provided to your Department.
- g) Was your Department or any of its agencies informed of an Indonesian Police Report dated 24 October 2001 which included the location of the rescue of SIEV X survivors - ie: 07 40 00S / 105 09 00E? If so by whom was this information provided? On what date? Please provide copies of any file notes and other documents related to this information being provided to your Department or agency.

RESPONSE

- a) to g) Much of the information requested has been made publicly available through the Senate Select Committee's inquiry and report into a Certain Maritime Incident and Senate Estimates Committee hearings. Defence is not prepared to devote the considerable time and effort required to further research the matters.