

Chair

Cabinet National Security Committee


NEW ZEALAND'S SECURITY COMMITMENTS TO AFGHANISTAN

Proposal

This paper seeks Cabinet's agreement to:

- (i) Extend New Zealand's commitment to the United Kingdom-led Afghan National Army Officer Academy in Afghanistan as part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's Resolute Support Mission for a further 12 months to 31 December 2017.
- (ii) Increase New Zealand's contribution by two personnel to a total of 10 to be deployed before the end of 2016.

Executive summary

1. New Zealand has invested significantly in Afghanistan's security since 2001, with over 3,500 New Zealand Defence Force personnel deployed in total including through New Zealand's Provincial Reconstruction Team in Bamyan (2003–13).
2. In March 2015, Cabinet agreed to extend New Zealand's commitment of eight personnel to the Afghan National Army Officer Academy to coincide with the scheduled drawdown of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (the Alliance's) Resolute Support Mission planned for 31 December 2016 [CAB Min 15 11/6 refers].
3. The Alliance has recently extended the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan beyond 2016.
4. Post this, the Alliance has encouraged countries to extend their commitments in Afghanistan in advance of the Alliance Summit in Warsaw (8-9 July).
5. s.6(b) 
6. The United Kingdom has asked New Zealand to increase our contribution to the Academy, to a total of 10 personnel.
7. The Academy is a key part of the mission, instructing Afghanistan's future military leaders, and personnel trained through the Academy are considered the most competent junior leaders in the Afghan forces.
8. An announcement of our ongoing military support, while modest, would come at a critical juncture, as Afghanistan seeks to regain significant tracts of territory lost following

the drawdown of the International Security and Assistance Force in 2014, and continue their negotiations in the peace process with the Taliban. s.9(g)(i)

Background

Resolute Support Mission

9. The Resolute Support Mission is the post-International Security Assistance Force mission in Afghanistan. The mission, launched on 1 January 2015, is a largely non-combat mission to train, advise and assist the Afghan security forces and institutions. A total of 39 nations contribute and the mission has a current force structure of 12,800. The mission was created at the invitation of Afghanistan and recognises that Afghanistan is now responsible for its own security.

10. This mission is the only mission where New Zealand partners with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Partner contributions

11. To date the following announcements of military commitments have been made:

- Earlier this year **Australia** increased its commitment from 250 to 270 personnel. s.6(b)
- The **United States** currently has the highest number of personnel deployed to the mission (9,800, which it has indicated will decrease to 5,500 after this year although it will continue to provide enablers to the mission).
- The **United Kingdom** has announced it will sustain its commitment of 450 personnel into 2017.
- **Germany** is committed to continuing its support and s.6(b)
- s.6(b)
- Other countries that are maintaining or increasing their commitments beyond this year include s.6(b) Denmark, s.6(b) Norway, s.6(b)

New Zealand support to the Afghan National Army Officer Academy

12. s.6(b)

[REDACTED] New Zealand currently has eight staff deployed to the Academy. We have received a request from the United Kingdom to increase our contribution by two mentors to a total of 10 personnel.

Legal Framework

13. The overarching legal framework for the Resolute Support Mission is provided by a NATO – Afghanistan Status of Forces Agreement. This defines the terms and conditions under which North Atlantic Treaty Organization forces are deployed, as well as the activities they are authorised to carry out. The formal mechanism for New Zealand's participation in the Resolute Support Mission is currently an arrangement signed on 24 December 2014 between New Zealand and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

14. This arrangement continues to cover New Zealand's participation in the Resolute Support Mission in the interim, but the legal arrangements would need to be updated prior to the increase in New Zealand's contribution by two personnel and to reflect the extension of New Zealand's commitment to December 2017. The mission is also supported by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2189 of December 2014.

Operational Risk and Risk Management Strategies

15. **Locations.** The Afghan National Army Officer Academy is located approximately 10 kilometres from central Kabul within the Marshal Fahim Defence University complex.
s.6(d)

16. **Physical Protection.** s.6(d)

17. **Force Protection.** s.6(d)

18. **Accommodation.** s.6(d)

s.6(b)

19. **Movement.** s.6(d)

20. **Operational Response Capability.** s.6(d)

21. **Medical Response Capability.** Medical support is comprehensive within Kabul and is provided by Coalition Forces, including aero-medical evacuation.

Logistical Support

22. s.6(a)

Logistical support is also provided from the United Kingdom as part of a Technical Arrangement between the United Kingdom Ministry of Defence and the New Zealand Defence Force.

Consultation

23. This paper has been prepared by the Ministry of Defence, the New Zealand Defence Force and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Treasury were informed.

Financial Implications

24. The cost of extending the New Zealand Defence Force contribution to the Afghan National Army Officer Academy for 12 months for 10 personnel, including the additional two personnel for the period October² to December 2016, is estimated at \$1.357M.

25. The deployment will not require any additional funding.

26. The following table sets out the expenditure and funding arrangements:

	\$m					
Vote Defence Force Minister of Defence	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 & Outyears	Total
Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests MCA Departmental Output Expenses: Military Operations in Support of a Rules-Based International Order (funded by revenue Crown)	0.697	0.660	-	-	-	1.357

² These estimates are based on an indicative deployment date of October 2016. The New Zealand Defence Force will confirm the specific date of the deployment.

Legislative Implications

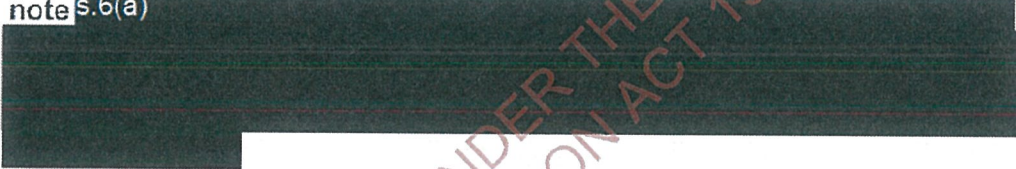
27. There are no legislative implications for this paper.

Publicity

28. If Cabinet approves the mandate extension, we intend to issue a joint press release outlining New Zealand's continued commitment and New Zealand would make a statement at the Alliance Summit in July.

Recommendations

29. The Ministers of Defence and of Foreign Affairs recommend that the Committee:

1. **note** that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has extended the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan beyond 2016;
2. **note** the deployment is the only one where New Zealand partners with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization;
3. **note** s.6(a) 
4. **note** that the United Kingdom has asked New Zealand to extend its contribution to the Afghan National Army Officer Academy and increase it by two personnel;
5. **agree** to extend the New Zealand Defence Force contribution to the Afghan National Army Officer Academy for a further 12 months to 31 December 2017;
6. **agree** to increase the size of the Afghan National Army Officer Academy contribution by an additional two personnel, to a total of 10 to be deployed before the end of 2016;
7. **note** the unmitigated operational threat for New Zealand Defence Force personnel in Afghanistan remains HIGH;
8. **note** the estimated cost to extend the New Zealand Defence Force contribution to the Afghan National Army Officer Academy for one year and increase the number of personnel from eight to 10 is assessed at \$1.357M;
9. **note** that this cost will be met from within existing appropriations;
10. **agree** that the legal arrangements for New Zealand's participation in the Resolute Support Mission be amended to reflect the increase in personnel and the extension to New Zealand's contribution to December 2017; and

11. note that the Minister of Foreign Affairs will consider the option of extending New Zealand's financial contribution to the sustainment of the Afghan National Security Forces beyond 2017 in the coming weeks.

Hon Gerry Brownlee
MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Hon Murray McCully
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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