

HON RON MARK, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Ministerial Overseas Travel: 30-06-2019 to 05-07-2019 – Release of Cabinet Documents

October 2019

This publication provides Cabinet documents regarding the proposal, and the report for Hon Ron Mark on his travel, from 30 June to 5 July 2019, to China for Defence related meetings.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- the June 2019 Cabinet minute of decision: *Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark* [CAB-19-MIN-0298]
- the associated Cabinet paper: *Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark: China – 30 June to 5 July 2019* [CAB-19-SUB-0298]
- the August 2019 Cabinet minute of decision: *Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark* [CAB-19-MIN-0393]
- the associated Cabinet paper: *Travel Report: Hon Ron Mark; China 30 Jun – 5 Jul 2019* [CAB-19-SUB-0393].

This pack has been released on the Ministry of Defence website, available at:

www.defence.govt.nz/publications.

It has been necessary to withhold certain information in accordance with the following provisions of the Official Information Act 1982. Where information is withheld, the relevant sections of the Act are indicated in the body of the document.

Information is withheld where making it available would be likely to prejudice:

- the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand [section 6(a)]
- the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on the basis of confidence by the Government of any other country [section 6(b)(i)].



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark

Portfolio Defence

On 17 June 2019, Cabinet:

- 1 **authorised** the absence of Hon Ron Mark from New Zealand, from 30 June to 5 July 2019, to travel to China, for Defence related meetings;
- 2 **agreed** that he be accompanied by one member of staff;
- 3 **approved** the expenditure of up to \$15,737 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs (Members of the Executive – Travel);
- 4 **noted** that he will be accompanied by officials from the Ministry of Defence and the New Zealand Defence Force, whose costs will be met by their respective agencies;
- 5 **agreed** that in his absence the Rt Hon Winston Peters act as Minister of Defence and Minister for Veterans;
- 6 **noted** that the House is not sitting during his absence.

Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet

Hard-copy distribution:
Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Minister
Hon Ron Mark

Chair
Cabinet

PROPOSED OVERSEAS TRAVEL: HON RON MARK: China – 30 June to 5 July 2019

Proposal

1. I seek Cabinet approval to travel to China for a counterpart visit in my capacity as the Minister of Defence.
2. [REDACTED] s6(a)
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] High level visits are an important pillar of the bilateral relationship, and my visit will provide an opportunity to build a relationship with my counterpart, Minister of National Defence Wei Fenghe. Minister Wei invited me to visit China during our bilateral meeting at last year's ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting – Plus, and again at this year's Shangri-La Dialogue.
3. In addition to meeting with General Wei, I also propose to meet with the Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission, General Zhang Youxia. China is organising a visit to a regional command, probably Xian.
4. Overall, the visit would enable me to deepen my understanding of China and will provide an opportunity for Minister Wei and me to sign the Memorandum on Defence Cooperation.
5. I will be away from New Zealand from Sunday 30 June until Friday 5 July 2019.
6. The Prime Minister has approved the travel in principle. The travel will occur over a recess week.
7. Travel will be via commercial transport.

Delegation Details

8. I propose to travel with one staff member from my office, and will be accompanied by officials from the Ministry of Defence and the New Zealand Defence Force.

Estimated Costs

9. Indicative costs for this travel are:

<u>Minister of Defence and one staff</u>	
Airfares and Taxes	\$ 13 711
Accommodation, meals, transport	\$ 0
Receptions/hospitality, gifts	\$ 1500
Contingency (@5%)	\$ 526
Total	\$15 737

Acting Ministers

10. The Rt Hon Winston Peters has agreed to act in the Defence and Veterans' portfolios.

Proactive Release

11. This paper will be proactively released following my travel.

Recommendations

12. The Minister of Defence recommends that Cabinet:

- a) **authorise** his absence from New Zealand from 30 June to 5 July 2019 to travel to China for counterpart meetings Shangri-La Dialogue;
- b) **agree** that the Minister be accompanied by one member of his office staff;
- c) **approve** the expenditure of \$15 737 for the travel expenses of the Minister and one staff member as a charge to Vote Internal Affairs: Members of the Executive – Travel; and
- d) **agree** that in his absence the Rt Hon Winston Peters will act in the Defence and Veterans' portfolios.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Ron Mark
Minister of Defence



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark

Portfolio Defence

On 12 August 2019, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Ron Mark under CAB-19-SUB-0393 on his travel, from 30 June to 5 July 2019, to China, for defence-related meetings.

Martin Bell
for Secretary of the Cabinet

Hard-copy distribution:
Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Minister
Hon Ron Mark

Released by the Minister of Defence


Chair, Cabinet

**TRAVEL REPORT:
HON RON MARK; CHINA 30 JUN – 5 JUL 2019**

Executive Summary

1. From 30 June – 5 July 2019 I travelled to China to conduct bilateral engagements. I was accompanied by officials from the Ministry of Defence and New Zealand Defence Force. This was my first visit to China, with the previous visit of a Minister of Defence conducted by Hon Gerry Brownlee in 2015. During this visit I also signed the New Zealand – China Memorandum of Arrangement concerning Defence Cooperation.

Report

2. My first formal engagement was a speech to the 'Dragon Course' of future Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) leaders at the National Defence University. This provided me with an opportunity to reinforce the importance of transparency in defence policies and actions, being a credible and trusted partner, and the New Zealand values which guide our actions at home and abroad. My speech has been released and is available on the Beehive website. The speech was well received, and during the question and answer there was particular interest in how much we saw ourselves supporting US activities goals in the region, and in our position on the South China Sea territorial disputes.
 3. My key bilateral engagement was with my counterpart, General Wei Fenghe, Minister of National Defense. s6(a), s6(b)(i)
- 

4. [Redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(i)

5. At the conclusion of our meeting General Wei and I signed the New Zealand – China Memorandum of Arrangement concerning Defence Cooperation. This non-binding MOA does not commit Defence to specific new activities but sets out the intent to maintain dialogue and recognises potential areas of common interest such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, counter terrorism, and maritime security. It is supported by a previously developed five year plan and annual plan of activities and engagements. The MOA has been released and is available on the Beehive website.

6. While in Beijing I also conducted a courtesy call with General Xu Quilang, Member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and Vice Chairman of the Central Military Committee. This was a very warm and productive engagement. I also conducted visits to a PLA guard unit, the Forbidden City and Great Wall. Chief of Defence Force NZDF, Air Marshal Kevin Short, conducted a call with his counterpart, General Li Zuocheng.

7. The second part of my visit was in Xi'an, in Shaanxi Province. While in Xi'an I was hosted by Major General Li Yang, Political Commissar of Shaanxi Provincial Military Region. This visit included a bilateral meeting, [Redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(i) at the North western Polytechnical University, and a visit to the Xi'an City Wall and the Terracotta Warriors. The focus for this portion of the visit was on understanding Chinese cultural and historical context.

8. My next engagement with my counterpart, General Wei, will be at the ADDMM+ in Thailand in November. Defence officials will attend the Xiangshan regional security Forum in Beijing in December.

Summary

9. [Redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(i) An important part of my discussions was making clear our independent and values based approach to foreign policy and defence decision making.

10. [Redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(i)

s6(a), s6(b)(i)

Proactive Release

11. I propose to proactively release this paper within 30 business days. This release will be subject to redaction as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendations

12. I recommend that Cabinet:

Note this report

Hon Ron Mark
Minister of Defence

Released by the Minister of Defence