

HON RON MARK, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Proposal to Renew the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation Deployment Mandate

December 2018

This publication provides the documents supporting Cabinet's decision in September 2018 to extend New Zealand's commitment of up to eight NZDF personnel to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation for two years to 30 September 2020.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- September 2018 Cabinet minute entitled: *Proposal to Renew the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation Deployment Mandate* [ERS-18-MIN-0020]
- Cabinet paper entitled: *Proposal to Renew the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation Deployment Mandate* [ERS-18-SUB-0020].

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 any international organisation [section 6(b)(ii)].



Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee

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.

Proposal to Renew the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation Deployment Mandate

Portfolio Foreign Affairs / Defence

On 11 September 2018, the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee:

- 1 **noted** that New Zealand's strategic objectives in contributing to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation include to:
 - 1.1 advance and protect New Zealand's foreign policy and strategic interests through contributing to peace and stability in the Middle East, and providing New Zealand with greater regional awareness in an area of global strategic importance; and
 - 1.2 support the maintenance of the international rules-based order, institutions (including the United Nations) and arrangements that reinforce global security through upholding conflict prevention and peace resolution processes in line with New Zealand values;
- 2 **noted** that the current mandate for New Zealand's contribution of up to eight NZDF personnel to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation expires on 30 September 2018 [CAB-16-MIN-0456];
- 3 **noted** that the operational threat level for NZDF personnel deployed to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation is [REDACTED] s6(a) for personnel deployed to the Golan Heights and Syria, and [REDACTED] s6(a) for personnel deployed to Lebanon;
- 4 **noted** that the risk to personnel is being managed by the United Nations and the NZDF through a range of personnel-based, procedural and physical security measures;
- 5 **agreed** to extend New Zealand's commitment of up to eight NZDF personnel to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation for two years to 30 September 2020;
- 6 **agreed** that the NZDF may temporarily exceed the Cabinet-mandated personnel numbers for this deployment for the purposes of command reconnaissance, rotation, and extraction of forces from theatre;
- 7 **noted** that the Chief of Defence Force will inform the Minister of Defence, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Prime Minister in advance whenever Cabinet-mandated personnel numbers are exceeded for the reasons set out in paragraph 6;
- 8 **noted** that, in the event that Cabinet decides not to extend the mandate, it is convention to provide at least six months' notice to the United Nations;

- 9 **noted** that the total estimated cost of the deployment is assessed as \$1.753 million;
- 10 **noted** that the estimated costs \$0.877 million in 2019/20 and \$0.128 million 2020/21 can be met from within the existing funding for Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests;
- 11 **noted** that there is a funding shortfall of \$0.748 million in 2018/19 that is not able to be met within existing baselines for Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests;
- 12 **noted** that the additional required funding of \$0.748 million in 2018/19 is proposed to be charged against the tagged Operating Contingency established as part of Budget 17 for Military Operations in Support of a Rules-based International Order;
- 13 **approved** the following changes to appropriations to give effect to the policy decision, in paragraph 5 above, with a corresponding impact on the operating balance;

Vote Defence Force Minister of Defence	NZ \$m – increase / (decrease)				
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 & out-years
Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure	0.748	-	-	-	-
Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests MCA					
Departmental Output Expense:					
Military Operations in Support of a Rules-Based International Order (funded by revenue Crown)					

- 14 **agreed** that the additional expenses required in 2018/19, under paragraph 13 above, be a charge against the tagged Operating Contingency established as part of Budget 17 for Military Operations in Support of a Rules-based International Order;
- 15 **agreed** that the change to appropriations for 2018/19 above be included in the 2018/19 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply.

Vivien Meek
Committee Secretary

Hard-copy distribution (see over)

Hard-copy-distribution:

Present:

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
Rt Hon Winston Peters
Hon Grant Robertson
Hon Andrew Little
Hon Stuart Nash
Hon Ron Mark

Officials present from:

Officials Committee for ERS
Office of the Prime Minister
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Office of the Chair

Hard-copy distribution:

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Minister of Defence

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Chair, External Relations and Security Committee

PROPOSAL TO RENEW THE UNITED NATIONS TRUCE SUPERVISION ORGANISATION DEPLOYMENT MANDATE

Proposal

1. This paper seeks Cabinet's agreement for a two-year extension of the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) deployment of up to eight personnel to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) mission in the Middle East when the current mandate expires on 30 September 2018.

Executive summary

2. New Zealand has contributed military observers to UNTSO since 1954, making it our longest-standing UN peacekeeping commitment. NZDF currently deploys seven personnel to the mission; four based in Lebanon and three in the Golan Heights. The current mandate provides for up to eight NZDF observers.

3. UNTSO operates in what has been some of the most contested territory in the Middle East including the Golan Heights in Syria s6(a). UNTSO military observers help to preserve peace and stability through monitoring ceasefires along the border regions between Israel and its Arab neighbours: Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and Syria; supervising armistice agreements; preventing security incidents from escalating; and assisting other UN peacekeeping operations in the region to fulfil their respective mandates including the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan Heights and United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

4. The deployment to UNTSO meets the following strategic objectives to:

- advance and protect New Zealand's foreign policy and strategic interests through contributing to peace and stability in the Middle East, and providing New Zealand with greater regional awareness in an area of global strategic importance; and
- support the maintenance of the international rules-based order, institutions (including the United Nations) and arrangements that reinforce global security through upholding conflict prevention and peace resolution processes in line with New Zealand values.

5. The international legal basis for this deployment is provided through United Nations Security Council Resolution 50 (1948).

6. Clashes among and between state and non-state actors in the areas around UNTSO, particularly the conflict in Syria, create additional risk for deployed personnel. However, the NZDF is monitoring the mission closely, particularly UNTSO's staged return to an area of heightened risk known as the Bravo Area of Limitation (this forms the 25 kilometre buffer strip on the eastern side of the Area of Separation) [see *figure 1*].

Background

7. UNTSO is the United Nations' longest-running peacekeeping operation. The mission was created following United Nations Security Council Resolution 50 (1948) to assist the United Nations Mediator to supervise the truce in Palestine following the Arab-Israeli War of 1948. The subsequent 1949 Armistice Agreements between Israel and its neighbours – Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria – required a United Nations presence, which has remained to the present day. UNTSO military observers supervise the armistice agreements, prevent isolated incidents from inadvertently escalating, and assist other UN peacekeeping operations in the region to fulfil their respective mandates. The ongoing UNTSO presence also helps to preserve peace by reducing day-to-day tensions.

8. There are currently 153 unarmed military observers from 26 troop-contributing nations, primarily from Europe as well as our Five Eyes partners Australia, Canada and the United States.¹

New Zealand's current commitments

9. As a consistent contributor since 1954, UNTSO is New Zealand's longest United Nations peacekeeping operation with a mandate of up to eight personnel. New Zealand currently has seven military observers in UNTSO – four Military Observers in Lebanon who are currently providing support to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), and three in the Golan Heights. The deployment of an eighth observer is planned, subject to Cabinet's renewal of this mandate.

10. The Golan Heights is the crossroads between Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. The Golan region has been widely contested since 1948 and is an epicentre for Middle East tensions. The area is currently delineated by an Area of Separation, which is buffered by monitored zones which extend west into Israel, and east, deeper into Syria ('the Bravo Area of Limitation'). The UNTSO presence in Lebanon patrols the "Blue Line" which demarcates the Israeli withdrawal in 2000, and is co-located with the UNIFIL mission in Naqura, southern Lebanon.

Comment

Principles underpinning the deployment

11. New Zealand's deployment to UNTSO meets a range of principles, (some of which are outlined in the *Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018*) which Ministers can apply when considering advice on deployments.

Is there a clear, legitimate and compelling case for New Zealand involvement?

1 UNTSO contributing nations: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bhutan, Canada, Chile, China, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, India, Ireland, Nepal, Netherlands, Norway, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States of America.

Supporting New Zealand's strategic and foreign policy interests in a more stable Middle East region

12. As transnational threats continue to grow, geographical isolation from regional instability in the Middle East is less able to isolate New Zealand from ripple effects to our economic and security well-being. Peace support operations like UNTSO, which act as a neutral international presence, are especially necessary in some of the highly-contested areas within the Middle East region where instability is fuelled by historic rivalries combined with contemporary threats including violent extremism and the conflict in Syria.

13. New Zealand's deployment to UNTSO constitutes a credible, enduring, but comparatively small commitment to peace efforts in the Golan Heights. The deployment means we can also participate in broader United Nations discussions on the wider region (including contiguous missions: UNDOF and UNIFIL), which help enhance New Zealand's situational awareness and understanding of how Middle Eastern insecurity could impact New Zealand and our security partners.

Support for the international rules-based order

14. New Zealand's national interests rely on the promotion and stability of the international rules-based order and the institutions and arrangements that uphold it. UN peacekeeping is one of the key institutions which reinforce global security through supporting conflict prevention and peace resolution processes. New Zealand's enduring UNTSO contribution demonstrates our commitment to international institutions such as the United Nations and its peacekeeping missions. At a time when New Zealand's contribution to UN peacekeeping operations is historically low, New Zealand's deployment to UNTSO is also a significant component of our overall ranking among the United Nations peacekeeping operations' troop-contributing nations.²

Deployment enables operational experience in a peace support mission

15. The UNTSO mission provides an opportunity for NZDF personnel to obtain operational experience in an established multinational environment. The mission is unique in that there are no specific prerequisites beyond officers of a Captain or Major-equivalent rank. Having the flexibility to deploy from a larger group of personnel, across the three services (Army, Navy, Air Force), also allows for greater inclusion of women, which assists in fulfilling New Zealand's obligations to the United Nations' Women, Peace and Security Agenda.³

16. UNTSO also affords a greater number of high-level staff and leadership opportunities for New Zealand personnel within United Nations peacekeeping operations, as leadership positions are systematically rotated through each of the troop contributing nations (TCN). For instance, New Zealander Major General David Gawn served as the Head of Mission and Chief of Staff for UNTSO from 2015 until 2017 and previously Major General Clive Lilley served from 2005 to 2006. These contributions were well received and demonstrated New Zealand's ability to command United Nations

2 As of June 2018; UNTSO comprises 7 of the 13 NZDF personnel in UN peacekeeping operations. This puts NZ as 97th on the list of 124 troop contributing nations.

3 While New Zealand doesn't currently have any women in UNTSO, 28 have served since 1996, including COL Helen Cooper, who was the first female UNTSO Station Chief in 2011.

Peacekeeping Operations, and to undertake military leadership roles on the international stage.

The legal basis for the deployment and consistency with international law

17. UNTSO is mandated by United Nations Security Council Resolution 50 (1948), which provided for a group of military observers to assist a United Nations Mediator to supervise the truce in Palestine. Resolution 73 (1949) subsequently provided for the Chief of Staff of UNTSO to supervise the Armistice Agreements in the region and requested continued service by UNTSO personnel to observe and maintain the cease-fire.

Risks to the safety and security of New Zealand personnel

18. The threat level for NZDF personnel in Lebanon [redacted] s6(a) with force protection provided by UNIFIL. For those deployed to the Golan Heights and Syria, the threat assessment [redacted] s6(a) Force protection in the Areas of Limitation is provided by the respective host nations (Israel and Syria), and by the UNDOF in the Area of Separation. UNDOF is a lightly-armed peacekeeping force, which operates under a separate but complementary mandate to UNTSO.

19. The unmitigated operational threat level for NZDF personnel deployed to UNTSO varies according to their location. [redacted] s6(a)

20. The NZDF further mitigates threats to personnel security through the conduct of comprehensive pre-deployment training which includes (but is not limited to) mine and improvised explosive device awareness, critical combat casualty care, and conduct after capture. UNTSO also carries out a regular programme of mission and theatre specific continuation training to maintain skill levels. [redacted] s6(a)

21. NZDF continually monitors the operational threat level, and should the security situation deteriorate significantly, the Chief of the Defence Force, in consultation with the Minister of Defence, would take appropriate measures to ensure the security of NZDF personnel, including the option of their withdrawal.

Return to the Bravo-Side

22. The ongoing Syrian conflict over the last seven years has heightened the risk environment on the Golan Heights, with UNTSO ceasing operations on the Bravo side [see **Figure 1**] since 2014. Since then, the tempo of unpredictable incidents has increased, [redacted] s6(a)

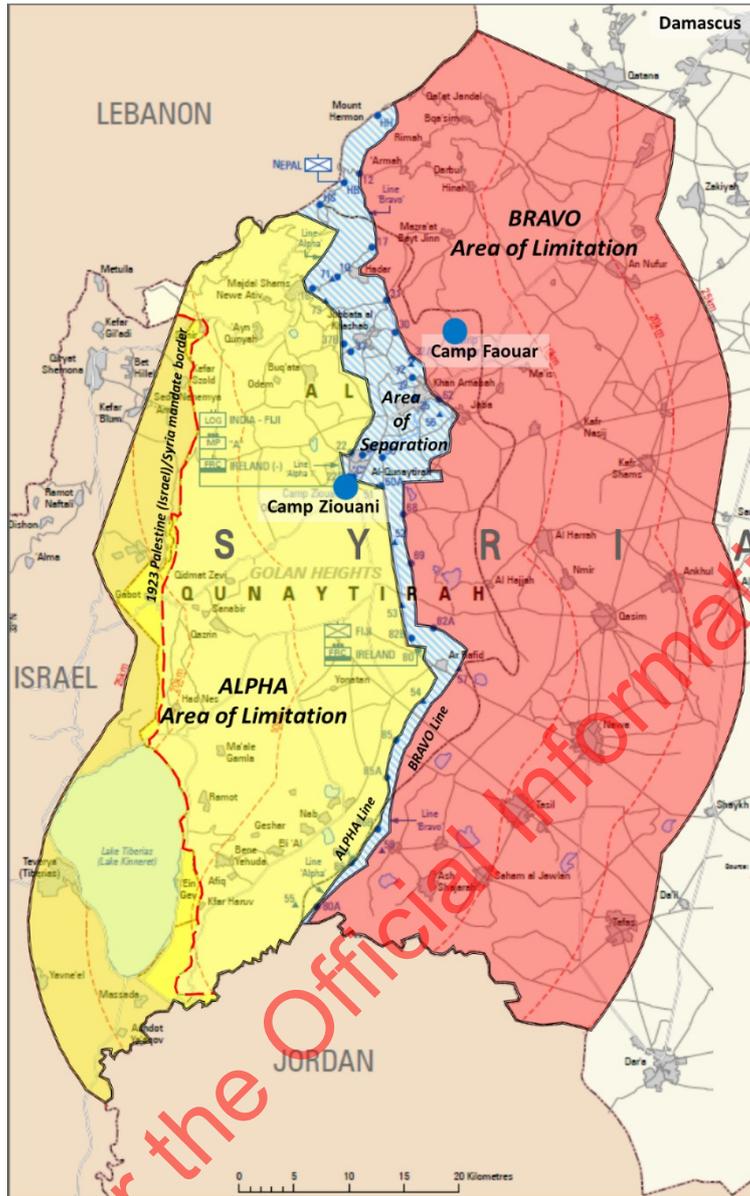


Figure 1: UNTSO Golan Heights Area of Operation

23. A reassessment of the threat profile has seen UNTSO and UNDOF return to the Bravo Area of Limitation in stages. The intent is for UNTSO to relocate the mission headquarters to Camp Faouar (on the Bravo side) s6(b)(ii)

[Redacted]

24. s6(b)(ii)

[Redacted]

[REDACTED]

25.

s6(b)(ii)

Implications for New Zealand's ability to still deploy to our immediate region should an emergency arise

26. The NZDF contribution to UNTSO does not impact on New Zealand's ability to deploy to our immediate region in the event of an emergency. The ability to select Military Observers from across the Defence Force also ensures there is no disproportionate burden on specific trades.

Future Options

27. UNTSO provides an opportunity for New Zealand to provide a meaningful contribution to Middle East peace and security through a small deployment. As a fully subscribed mission it is unlikely that New Zealand will receive a request to increase our contribution. From time to time the NZDF is offered the opportunity to fill higher level staff and leadership roles. When this occurs it is anticipated the position will be filled from within the mandated numbers. The Ministers of Defence and Foreign Affairs, and the Prime Minister will be notified when changes are proposed.

Rotations

28. In 2012 Cabinet agreed to the inclusion in all NZDF deployment papers of a provision that allows NZDF to temporarily exceed Cabinet-mandated personnel numbers for the purposes of command reconnaissance, rotation, and extraction of forces in and out of theatre [CAB Min (12) 10/2 refers]. In July 2018 Cabinet noted the 2012 decision and agreed that this convention will continue [CAB 18-MIN-0346 refers]. The Chief of Defence Force will inform the Minister of Defence, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Prime Minister in advance whenever a rotation, extraction or command reconnaissance is planned above mandated numbers.

Consultation

29. This paper has been prepared by the Ministry of Defence, the NZDF and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (NAB, NSG, PAG) and the Treasury were consulted.

Financial Implications

30. The estimated cost of the proposed deployment extension is \$1.753M.

s6(b)(ii)

[REDACTED]

31. There is a shortfall in funding available from current appropriations of \$0.748M because funding for Vote Defence Force: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests is fully committed for 2018/19 as a result of existing mandated missions. The additional funding required of \$0.748M is proposed to be charged against the tagged Operating Contingency established as part of Budget 17 for Military Operations in Support of a Rules-based International Order.

32. The funding required in 2019/20 and 2020/21 can be met from within the existing funded Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests.

33. The following table sets out the expenditure and funding arrangements for this deployment.

Vote Defence Force	NZ \$million				
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Total
Estimated cost of proposed deployment	0.748	0.877	0.128	-	1.753
Total funded from existing appropriation: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests	-	0.877	0.128	-	1.005
Additional Funding Required	0.748	-	-	-	0.748

34. The following table sets out the impact for this deployment and other pending deployment decisions on the balance of tagged Operating contingency established as part of Budget 17 for Military Operations in Support of a Rules-based International Order:

Vote Defence Force	NZ \$million				
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Total
Balance of tagged Operating contingency	2.420	20.000	20.000	-	42.420
Previously approved deployments	(3.410)	(8.332)	-	-	(11.742)
Afghanistan Deployment - pending	-	(1.763)	-	-	(1.763)
UNMISS Deployment - pending	-	(0.525)	-	-	(0.525)
MFO Deployment - pending	-	(1.994)	-	-	(1.994)
BPC Deployment - pending	-	(18.913)	-	-	(18.913)
Funding for this deployment	-	(0.748)	-	-	(0.748)
Remaining tagged operating contingency balance	(0.990)	(12.275)	20.000	-	6.735

Publicity

35. The outcome of this paper will be announced with the concurrent Cabinet deployment decisions by the Prime Minister. A redacted version of this Cabinet paper will then be proactively released.

36. The United Nations and our partners will be informed separately through diplomatic and military channels.

Recommendations

37. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence recommend that Cabinet:

1. **note** New Zealand's strategic objectives in contributing to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation include to:
 - i) advance and protect New Zealand's foreign policy and strategic interests through contributing to peace and stability in the Middle East, and providing New Zealand with greater regional awareness in an area of global strategic importance; and
 - ii) support the maintenance of the international rules-based order, institutions (including the United Nations) and arrangements that reinforce global security through upholding conflict prevention and peace resolution processes in line with New Zealand values.
2. **note** that the current mandate for New Zealand's contribution of up to eight NZDF personnel to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation expires on 30 September 2018 [CAB-16-MIN-0456 refers];
3. **note** that the operational threat level for NZDF personnel deployed to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation [REDACTED] s6(a) for personnel deployed to the Golan Heights and Syria, and [REDACTED] s6(a) for personnel deployed to Lebanon;
4. **note** that the risk to personnel is being managed by the United Nations and the NZDF through a range of personnel-based, procedural and physical security measures;
5. **agree** to extend New Zealand's commitment of up to eight NZDF personnel to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation for two years to 30 September 2020;
6. **agree** that the New Zealand Defence Force may temporarily exceed the Cabinet-mandated personnel numbers for this deployment for the purposes of command reconnaissance, rotation, and extraction of forces from theatre;
7. **note** that the Chief of Defence Force will inform the Minister of Defence, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Prime Minister in advance whenever Cabinet-mandated personnel numbers are exceeded for the reasons set out in recommendation (6);
8. **note** that in the event that Cabinet decides not to extend the mandate it is convention to provide at least six months' notice to the United Nations;
9. **note** that the total estimated cost of the deployment is assessed as \$1.753M;
10. **note** the estimated costs \$0.877M in 2019/20 and \$0.128M 2020/21 can be met from within the existing funding for Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests;

11. **note** that there is a funding shortfall of \$0.748M in 2018/19 that is not able to be met within existing baselines for Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests;
12. **note** the additional required funding of \$0.748M in 2018/19 is proposed to be charged against the tagged Operating Contingency established as part of Budget 17 for Military Operations in Support of a Rules-based International Order.
13. **approve** the following changes to appropriations to give effect to the policy decision in recommendation (5) above with a corresponding impact on the operating balance;

Vote Defence Force Minister of Defence	NZ \$m – increase / (decrease)				
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 & out-years
Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure					
Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests MCA	0.748	-	-	-	-
Departmental Output Expense:					
Military Operations in Support of a Rules- Based International Order (funded by revenue Crown)					

14. **agree** that the additional expenses required in 2018/19 under recommendation (13) above be a charge against the tagged Operating Contingency established as part of Budget 17 for Military Operations in Support of a Rules-based International Order;

15. **agree** that the proposed change to appropriations for 2018/19 above be included in the 2018/19 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply.

Authorised for lodgement

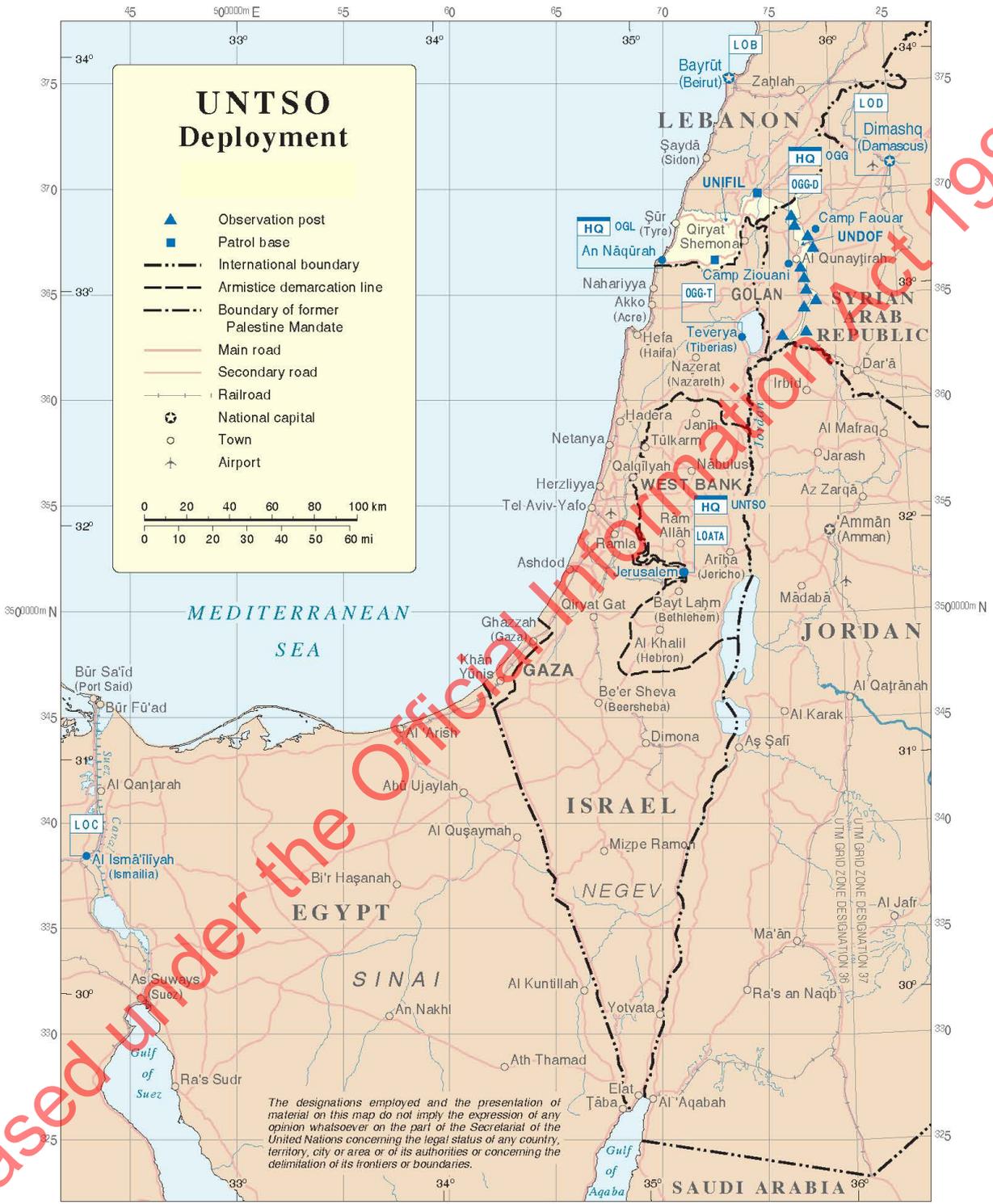
Rt Hon Winston Peters
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon Ron Mark
MINISTER OF DEFENCE

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Annex A: UNTSO Area of Operations

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