



Minute of Decision

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Afghanistan: New Zealand's Post-Provincial Reconstruction Team Commitments

Portfolio: Foreign Affairs

On 18 February 2013, following reference from the Cabinet External Relations and Defence Committee, Cabinet:

- 1 noted that the New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Bamyan is on schedule to complete its withdrawal from Afghanistan in April 2013;
- 2 noted that the NATO/International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan is not scheduled to end until December 2014, and that it remains in New Zealand's interests to continue to contribute to international efforts to reinforce the gains made over the last 11 years so that Afghanistan does not again become a base for international terrorism;
- 3 noted that two of New Zealand's key objectives in Afghanistan remain current after the departure of the PRT:
 - 3.1 to contribute to international counter-terrorism efforts and the maintenance of security in Afghanistan;
 - 3.2 to maintain and enhance New Zealand's international reputation and relationships with security partners, ensuring New Zealand is seen as a credible and reliable partner which has made a positive contribution to Afghanistan throughout the course of the mission;

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Out of scope

Out of scope

s6(a)

Out of scope

- 15 **noted** that the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defence will review all NZDF deployments in Afghanistan in December 2013, in light of the security and political environment at the time and the intentions of ISAF partners;

- 16 **noted** that the PRT Theatre Extraction Team will relocate from Bamyán to Bagram upon the closure of the PRT, and expects to have completed its tasks by 30 June 2013;
- 17 **agreed** to extend the deployment of the 19 person Theatre Extraction Team from 1 May 2013 to 30 June 2013, to be supported by up to 32 NZDF surge personnel;
- 18 **noted** that the cost of the NZDF deployments in Afghanistan to 30 April 2014 will be \$7.896 million, which can be met from within existing Vote Defence Force appropriations that are available for committed and planned operational deployments during 2012/13 and 2013/14;
- 19 **noted** that the New Zealand Embassy will continue to operate in Kabul beyond the withdrawal of the PRT, although will close before the end of 2014, and that a decision will be sought from Cabinet on the exact closure date in due course;
- 20 **noted** that New Zealand's signature development projects in Bamyán remain on schedule at this stage for substantive completion by the end of 2013, but that timing remains subject to the security situation and availability of flights to and from the province;

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

- 22 **noted** that the current ISAF mission is expected to be replaced on 1 January 2015 by another NATO-led mission, Operation Resolute Support, which would focus on training, advising and assisting the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF);
- 23 **noted** that Ministers expect that New Zealand's in-principle three year support to the ANAOA from 2013, and New Zealand's initial three year financial contribution to ANSF sustainment from 2015, is likely to form the basis of New Zealand's post-2014 support to Afghanistan, along with further development assistance to Bamyán;
- 24 **noted** that the Minister of Defence intends to make an announcement affirming Cabinet's decisions at the NATO/ISAF Defence Ministers' Meeting on 22 February 2013 in Brussels, following a public announcement by the Prime Minister.

Secretary of the Cabinet

Reference: CAB (13) 60

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