



Cabinet

CAB Min (09) 5/3A

Minute of Decision

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Afghanistan: New Zealand's Contributions Beyond September 2009

Portfolios: Foreign Affairs / Defence

On 16 February 2009, following reference from the Cabinet External Relations and Defence Committee (ERD), Cabinet:

Background

- 1 noted that New Zealand's engagement in Afghanistan began [redacted] s9(2)(g)(i) after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, and has been transformed subsequently into a broader commitment involving international organisations, including the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), and a substantial number of countries with which New Zealand is allied or enjoys close relations;
- 2 noted that, despite some improvements in Afghanistan since early success against Al Qa'ida and the Taleban in 2001, the overall situation remains of major concern and requires an ongoing and substantial international programme of security and development assistance to the government of Afghanistan;
- 3 noted:
 - 3.1 the continuous involvement of New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel and assets in Afghanistan since December 2001, with the focus on the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Bamyán Province [CAB Min (02) 23/2; CAB Min (02) 30/20; CAB Min (03) 19/12; CAB Min (04) 8/5 and CAB Min (04) 41/31; CAB Min (05) 40/1; CAB Min (06) 12/15; and CAB Min (07) 8/3];
 - 3.2 that in November 2007, the previous government agreed to the continued deployment of military, police [redacted] s6(a) in Afghanistan for one year to 30 September 2009 [CAB Min (07) 42/13];

noted that New Zealand's contributions in Afghanistan since 2001, through both military and development assistance, total more than \$160.0 million;

noted New Zealand's International Aid and Development Agency's (NZAID) current three-year (2009-2011) \$21.0 million programme of assistance to Afghanistan;

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- 6 **noted** that New Zealand's security and development efforts in Afghanistan are intended to be transitional, assisting the government of Afghanistan to be able to wield effective authority and good governance throughout the country;
- 7 **noted** that the political and security environment for the New Zealand effort in Afghanistan remains of concern, with threat environments ranging currently from MEDIUM to HIGH;

Extension of New Zealand contribution in Afghanistan

- 8 **noted** that, based on the current level of international deployments and the re-rolling of combat support units, the New Zealand security effort in Afghanistan, with particular reference to the PRT in Bamyan Province, remains sustainable until November 2010

s9(2)(g)(i)

- 9 **agreed** to the continuation of New Zealand's current security effort in Afghanistan, for one year from 1 October 2009 until 30 September 2010 at an estimated cost of \$41.443 million, comprising the following elements:

- 9.1 deployment of the PRT of up to 140 NZDF personnel, based mainly in Bamyan province with associated support staff at Bagram airbase and in Kabul;

Out of scope

s6(a)

s6(a)

- 12 **agreed** to the continued attachment of three Police trainers to a European Union policing programme and involved in training and mentoring the Afghan National Police in Bamyán province for one year, from 1 October 2009 until 30 September 2010, at a cost of up to \$1.0 million to be funded by NZAID;

s6(a)

Provincial Reconstruction Team issues

- 15 **noted** that, because of deteriorating security conditions, the NZDF has taken steps within the current mandate to mitigate ongoing risks but that a separate paper will be submitted shortly to ERD seeking approval to raise the current authorisation for personnel deployed to the PRT above 140;
- 16 **noted** that the options listed above both directly support the PRT and also contribute to other important areas such as co-ordination and capacity building, support for the UN and assistance to New Zealand's security partners, thus greatly enhancing New Zealand's overall profile and reflecting the multifaceted nature of operations in Afghanistan;
- 17 **noted** the potential need for additional finance to cover infrastructure and capability costs associated with the extension of the Bamyán PRT beyond September 2009;

- 18 **noted** that urban encroachment on the PRT base during the next two-to-three years may force New Zealand to consider substantial rebuilding or even relocation of the base which, if or when it becomes necessary, will incur significant additional costs;

Defence funding issues

- 19 **noted** that the current level of appropriation and future baseline funding will be inadequate to fully support the marginal costs of all future NZDF deployments beyond 2009/10;

- 20 **noted** that defence funding issues relating to operationally deployed forces will be addressed in an upcoming paper to ERD;

- 21 **noted** that [redacted] Out of scope
[redacted] the NZDF has limited capacity at present to consider additional options beyond the current mix of commitments;

Next steps

[redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(i)

[redacted] Out of scope

- 24 **agreed** that a review of New Zealand's commitment to Afghanistan beyond September 2010 be undertaken to examine more deeply the needs and opportunities for change, taking account of:

24.1 developments in Bamyan Province and other parts of Afghanistan;

24.2 moves towards Afghanistan and the re-balancing of military and non-military effort by other international contributors;

[redacted] s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

[redacted] Out of scope

- 25 **noted** that the findings of the review, including the financial implications of recommended options, will be reported to relevant Ministers by mid-2009.

Secretary of the Cabinet

Reference: CAB (09) 40; ERD Min (09) 1/2

Secretary's note: This minute replaces ERD Min (09) 1/2. Cabinet added new paragraphs 13 and 14.

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