



Minute of Decision

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New Zealand Commitments in Afghanistan: Assessment and Requirements for 2011

Portfolios: Police / Foreign Affairs / Defence

On 13 December 2010, following reference from the Cabinet External Relations and Defence Committee (ERD), Cabinet:

Background

- 1 **noted** that a number of decisions were taken in 2009 and 2010 relating to the mandate of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) [REDACTED] s6(a) [REDACTED] [CAB Min (09) 5/3A, CAB Min (09) 28/13, ERD Min (10) 2/2, ERD Min (10) 6/1, ERD Min (10) 10/1];
- 2 **noted** that the international effort in Afghanistan has been refocused over the past year, as the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) looks to begin the transition to Afghan leadership in security, governance, and development in 2011;
- 3 **noted** that ISAF has emphasised that the new counter-insurgency and transition strategies will take time to work, and that ISAF nations will need to provide the necessary resources to bring about sustainable transition;
- 4 **noted** that initial assessments are that Bamyan is a leading contender to begin the formal transition process some time in 2011, and that this process is expected to take 18 to 24 months to complete;
- 5 **noted** that, as the PRT lead nation in Bamyan, New Zealand has a crucial role in driving the transition process forward, including managing the risks and resource requirements;
- 6 **noted** that New Zealand's objectives for credible transition in Bamyan in the medium term will entail a readjustment of New Zealand's effort and resources;

Security

- 7 **noted** that maintaining an adequate security presence is crucial to:
 - 7.1 protect PRT civilian and military personnel;
 - 7.2 enable development projects to be carried out;

7.3 mitigate the risks of Bamyan being targeted by insurgents wanting to undermine the transition process;

8 **agreed** that the PRT maintain a security presence of up to 140 New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel in Bamyan until September 2011;

Development and governance

9 **noted** that development and governance in Bamyan is lagging behind, which could stall the transition process if resources are not sustained;

10 **noted** that consideration will be given to sending Territorial Force personnel with the appropriate skills to undertake development work in Bamyan;

11 **noted** the need for New Zealand to maintain resources in support of development in Bamyan, including the immediate implementation of projects on energy and agriculture;

New Zealand Police

12 **noted** that a sustained effort to build the capacity of the Afghan National Police (ANP), including at the district level, is a fundamental part of the transition process;

13 **agreed** that two additional New Zealand Police (Police) officers be deployed to Bamyan as soon as practicable, at an annual cost of \$650,000, to help ensure that New Zealand maintains its leadership role in policing assistance efforts during the transition process;

14 **agreed** that the Police be permitted to conduct district-based assistance to the ANP where security conditions allow, to ensure more comprehensive coverage of the ANP capacity-building effort;

15 **agreed** that the safety of the Police be the paramount consideration for any movement to the districts and that, based on the current threat assessment for the north-eastern areas of Bamyan along the Baghlan border, the Police not be permitted to operate there;

16 **approved** the following changes to appropriations to fund the deployment of two additional Police officers to Bamyan, with no impact on the operating balance or debt:

Vote Police Minister of Police	\$m – increase/(decrease)				
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15 & Outyears
Departmental Output Expense: Specific Crime Prevention Services and Maintenance of Public Order (funded by revenue Crown)	0.162	0.488	-	-	-
Vote Defence Force Minister of Defence					
Departmental Output Expense: Operationally Deployed Forces Annual (funded by revenue Crown)	(0.162)	(0.488)	-	-	-
Total Operating	-	-	-	-	-

- 17 **agreed** that the changes to appropriations for 2010/11 above be included in the 2010/11 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increases be met from Imprest Supply;

Next steps

- 18 **directed** officials to:

18.1 carry out a strategic assessment in early 2011, which will assess the impact of the additional PRT resources and what will be required beyond September 2011 when the current PRT and NZDF mandates in Afghanistan expire;

18.2 report to ERD with options for its consideration;

- 19 19.1 **noted** the need to ensure appropriate public messaging on New Zealand's contributions in 2011 and beyond;

19.2 **invited** the Prime Minister, in consultation with relevant Ministers, to announce decisions on resources needed in Bamyan province over 2011, and the outcomes of the Afghanistan strategic assessment, once completed.

Secretary of the Cabinet

Reference: CAB (10) 690; ERD Min (10) 12/1

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