

MoD 43/2012
NZDF 139/2012?



02/04/2012

SPD/BSR/6/6/1

Minister of Foreign Affairs

For action by 2 April 2012

► Minister of Defence

For action by 2 April 2012

Afghanistan: Recent and forthcoming developments

Submission	Issues
Purpose	This submission informs Ministers of formal requests for further contributions in Afghanistan, forthcoming meetings, and the expectations of key security partners. It also seeks guidance on next steps in the Cabinet paper process.

Recommended referrals

Prime Minister

For information by 2 April 2012

Contact details

NAME	ROLE	DIVISION	WORK PHONE	MOBILE PHONE
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	Dir: Strategic Commitments	NZDF		

Minister's Office comments

Signed / Referred
Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Key points

- There are three major Ministerial-level meetings over the coming months with a focus on ensuring Afghanistan's sustainability and stability upon the withdrawal of the ISAF mission in 2014. [REDACTED] s9(2)(g)(i)

[REDACTED] s6(a), s6(b)(i) and s9(2)(g)(i)

- New Zealand has received a formal request from the US to contribute US\$2 million per annum to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) from 2015, with this amount potentially declining over the period 2018-24. We have been asked to respond to this request in time for the Foreign / Defence Ministers' meeting on 19 April 2012.
- New Zealand also received a formal request from the UK to provide "four or five" trainers to the UK-led Afghan National Army Officer Academy from 2013, and an informal request for a similar number of trainers to a UK-led Special Forces training team for training an Afghan Ministry of Interior Response Unit. We have yet to respond substantively to these requests and the UK will hope for a response to the ANAOA request in time for the NATO/ISAF Leaders' Summit on 21 May 2012.
- We recommend New Zealand attends both the Brussels and Chicago meetings at Ministerial level to highlight New Zealand's commitment to Afghanistan until 2014 and to get a first-hand perspective of ISAF's plans for Bamyan and the rest of Afghanistan.

[REDACTED] s6(a) and s9(2)(g)(i)

- Last month ISAF indicated informally that it would like to see transition complete in Bamyan by the end of 2012. Along with a more aggressive drawdown strategy across the coalition, this development provides New Zealand with an opportunity to close the PRT and withdraw from Bamyan in 2013, rather than 2014 as currently planned. With other PRT's closing this year, US officials are comfortable with the NZPRT closing at a time of New Zealand's choosing, conscious that as the PRT now remains New Zealand's only significant Afghanistan contribution.

[REDACTED] s6(a) and s9(2)(g)(i)

- There are various advantages and disadvantages to closing the PRT in 2013, most of which are outlined in Annex A of this submission. Should Ministers wish to give serious consideration to a 2013 withdrawal, officials would seek the formal, considered views of NATO/ISAF and partners and prepare a Cabinet paper seeking a decision on whether to revise the PRT's withdrawal timeline. If Ministers remain comfortable with current policy settings, officials will instead finalise a draft Cabinet paper setting the objectives and configuration of the PRT from September 2012 to September 2013, premised on a 2014 withdrawal.

Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

- 1 **Note** that New Zealand has received three requests for longer-term contributions to Afghanistan: Yes / No
 - From the US (formal): US\$2 million per annum for funding to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) from 2015 to 2017, potentially decreasing thereafter;
 - From the UK (formal): a small number of trainers for the UK-led Afghan National Army Officer Academy (ANAOA), from 2013; and
 - From the UK (informal): a small number of trainers for a UK-led Special Forces training team.
 - 2 **Note** that the US has asked that financial contributions to the ANSF be confirmed in time for the NATO/ISAF Ministerial meeting in Brussels on 19 April; Yes / No
 - 3 **Agree** that officials engage with the UK on a non-committal basis to seek further specifics on current UK planning for the ANAOA; Yes / No
 - 4 **Note** that officials recommend Ministerial attendance at both the Brussels Ministerial meeting in April and the Chicago Summit in May; Yes / No
 - 5 **Note** that there have been informal indications from ISAF and US officials that they would like to see transition completed in Bamyán by the end of 2012 and, as a consequence, the PRT could potentially close in 2013, with the blessing of ISAF; Yes / No
 - 6 **Agree** that New Zealand retains its current 'in principle' commitment to Bamyán to 2014 and that officials finalise the draft Cabinet paper setting the objectives and configuration of the PRT from September 2012 on this basis; Yes / No
- OR**
- Agree** that officials seek the considered, formal views of NATO/ISAF and partners of a possible 2013 withdrawal from Bamyán and prepare a Cabinet paper that seeks a decision on bringing the planned timing of the withdrawal of the PRT forward from 2014 to late 2013. Yes / No

Gerard van Bohemen
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

John McKinnon
Secretary of Defence

R.R. Jones
Lieutenant General
Chief of Defence Force

Report

Formal requests for longer-term commitments

There are three major Afghanistan meetings to be held over the coming months (the Defence / Foreign Ministers' meeting in Brussels in April, the NATO/ISAF Leaders' Summit Chicago in May, and the Development Conference Tokyo in July). All are focussed on trying to ensure a sustainable and stable future for Afghanistan once the majority of international combat forces withdraw in 2014.

2 In the lead up to these meetings various forms of post-2014 assistance are being canvassed actively. To date, New Zealand has received three specific requests:

- i) a formal request for funding for the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF);
- ii) a formal request for trainers for the Afghan National Army Officer Academy (ANAOA); and
- iii) an informal request for trainers for Ministry of Interior (MOI) Special Forces basic training.

Financial contributions to the ANSF

s6(a) and s6(b)(i)



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



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

Request for "post-2014" military support

7 In August 2011, the UK asked New Zealand to contribute a small number of trainers, from 2013, to the UK-led ANAOA (known colloquially as "Sandhurst in the Sand"). The UK proposes to take the lead at the ANAOA, contributing 75% of the initial trainers - s6(a) and s6(b)(i)

s6(a) and s6(b)(i)

9 The NZDF has also received an informal request from the UK for a contribution of Special Forces personnel to assist in the basic – level training of Afghan MOI Special Forces personnel. This would be as part of a UK-led Special Forces training team. s9(2)(g)(i)

10 We intend to refrain from making a recommendation on any military contributions until Cabinet has had an opportunity to consider these alongside other possible alternative longer-term commitments. In the meantime, should Ministers wish, officials could engage with the UK on a non-committal basis to seek further specifics on what a New Zealand contribution might entail.

Forthcoming meetings on Afghanistan

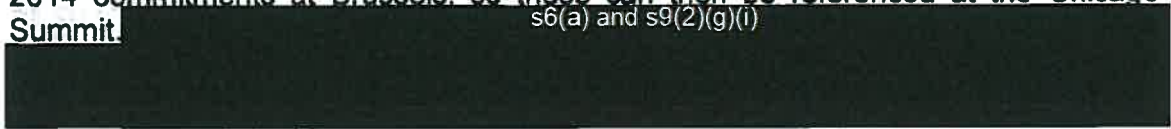
11 There is an expectation from ISAF and key security partners that these and other options for longer-term commitments will be discussed at the major Ministerial-level meetings on Afghanistan over the coming months. Admiral Stavridis, NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), may also raise this issue during his visit to New Zealand over 9-11 April 2012.

The NATO/ISAF Defence and Foreign Ministers' Meeting, 19 April, Brussels

Purpose and expectations

12 The primary objective of the 'Jumbo Ministerial' is to shape the ground for the Chicago Leaders' Summit, and provide an opportunity for discussion of the Summit's preliminary outcomes. To demonstrate the international community's practical

long-term support to Afghanistan, the US, UK, Australia and some other ISAF members are particularly keen for all countries to articulate clearly their specific post-2014 commitments at Brussels, so these can then be referenced at the Chicago Summit. s6(a) and s9(2)(g)(i)

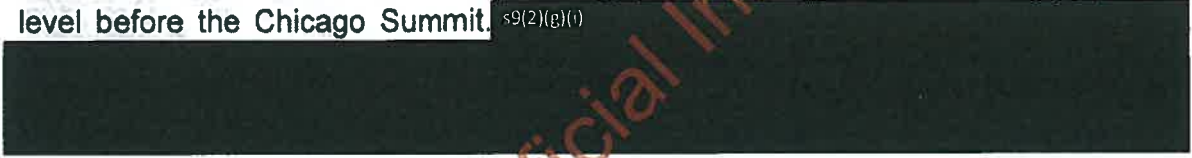


s6(a) and s9(2)(g)(i)



New Zealand's attendance

14 We understand that a number of ISAF members will attend at either Defence or Foreign Minister level, but not both. We recommend that New Zealand, likewise, be represented at Ministerial level. This is will be particularly important if we do not intend to make any formal commitments at Brussels or Chicago, as Ministerial attendance will provide an opportunity to explain privately New Zealand's position both in the ISAF forum and to key security partners in bilaterals at an appropriate level before the Chicago Summit. s9(2)(g)(i)



15 We understand that NATO/ISAF is currently considering when transition should be declared complete in Bamyán. This will impact on New Zealand's own planning with regard to the PRT and its withdrawal. ISAF acknowledges that the end of transition does not necessarily mean the closure of the PRT and wishes to take into account New Zealand's own views and planning. Ministerial attendance in Brussels will, therefore, be an opportunity to get a first-hand understanding of ISAF's perspective when it comes to setting the timeline for withdrawing the NZPRT.

NATO/ISAF Leaders' Summit, 20 – 21 May, Chicago

Purpose and expectations

16 The stated goal for the Chicago Summit is for NATO/ISAF to reinforce the message that there is a credible, sustainable and effective transition process in place in Afghanistan, and to provide concrete and coherent support for the country after transition.

s6(a) and s6(b)(i)



s6(a) and s6(b)(i)

New Zealand's attendance

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

We recommend that New Zealand is represented at Ministerial level.

Afghanistan Development Summit, 8 July, Tokyo

Purpose and expectations

20 The Tokyo conference will focus on Afghanistan's sustainable economic development and also is seen as an opportunity for donors and the Afghan government to review progress on Afghanistan's financial / anti-corruption reforms. Although it too has been described explicitly as 'not a pledging conference', participants are expected to come to Tokyo with concrete and specific commitments to sustain development assistance into the 'Transformation Decade' of 2015-2024.

New Zealand's attendance

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

The policy process – what next?

22 Last month senior officials within NATO/ISAF informally indicated that they would like to see the transition process complete in Bamyan by the end of 2012 (and possibly as early as September).

s6(a) and s6(b)(i)

23 Although NATO/ISAF has yet to articulate a formal view of its own preference for the timing of a New Zealand withdrawal, this recent development, and the more aggressive drawdown strategies that are being articulated across the coalition, provide New Zealand with a potential opportunity to bring forward its drawdown timetable to withdraw completely from Bamyan in 2013, allowing for the substantive accomplishment of legacy development projects, including the Renewable Energy Project for Bamyan, the Agricultural Support Programme, and the and the start of Japanese-led implementation of the upgrade of Bamyan airport by late 2013.

24 There are various advantages and disadvantages in bringing the PRT's withdrawal forward from 2014 to 2013. A preliminary overview of these

considerations is attached as Annex A to provide Ministers with an initial appreciation of the issues.

s6(b)(ii) and s9(2)(g)(i)

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

Irrespective of the timing of our withdrawal from Bamyán, New Zealand will also still be asked for longer-term post-2014 contributions.

27 Should Ministers wish to give serious consideration to implementing a 2013 withdrawal a decision on a new withdrawal timeframe would ideally be made by April / May 2012. An early decision on a 2013 withdrawal would:

- give the PRT the best opportunity to set conditions for an orderly and planned withdrawal (noting that to ensure a well-planned withdrawal in 2013 this process would ideally start by May / June 2012);
- provide PRT partners (Malaysia, US, EUPOL, Japan) and the Bamyán provincial government with time to adapt their planning; and
- allow the configuration and objectives of the PRT from September 2012 to be set appropriately;

s9(2)(g)(i)

28 Should Ministers wish to examine seriously the option of closing the PRT in 2013, officials would seek the formal, considered views of NATO/ISAF and partners and prepare a Cabinet paper that considers the options and seeks a decision on a new withdrawal timeline. We have already begun work on planning for a 2013 withdrawal contingency, the broad mechanics and current assessment of consequences of which are outlined in Annex B.

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

Therefore, should Ministers remain content, at this point, to maintain our current policy of an 'in principle' commitment to Bamyán until 2014, officials would instead finalise the current draft Cabinet paper which sets the objectives and configuration of the PRT from September 2012 as we work towards a 2014 withdrawal.

ANNEX A: Some of the considerations of a 2013 or 2014 withdrawal

ISSUES	2014 WITHDRAWAL	2013 WITHDRAWAL
Bamyan security	PRT able to continue substantive training and mentoring of the PQRF, including after the ANP takes responsibility for security in the north-east. This would contribute to a better chance of sustainable security for Bamyan (meeting the goal of "irreversible transition") and may assist in encouraging PRT partners to remain in Bamyan after New Zealand departs.	The PQRF will have two operational platoons, with a third platoon trained but not operationally mentored at the time of withdrawal. s6(a) and s9(2)(g)(i)
Bamyan governance	PRT able to provide additional mentoring and support to the provincial government and local ANSF as they take full responsibility for the governance and security of the province.	Governance mentoring / support would be curtailed as the PRT turns its focus towards withdrawal a year earlier. However, compared with much of the rest of Afghanistan, governance in Bamyan is relatively well established.
Bamyan development	Current planning of PRT and New Zealand development projects assumes a continued NZDF/PRT presence until 2014. PRT able to provide support to oversee completion of New Zealand's energy and agriculture programme to a state in which it could exist independently of the PRT (we anticipate that New Zealand PRT civilians, including development personnel, would withdraw from Bamyan at the same time as the NZDF).	On current planning, the main elements of the New Zealand energy and agricultural projects will be delivered by October 2013. Officials are working on contingency planning that would allow for the remaining elements of projects to continue independent of the PRT from late 2013 (i.e. earlier than initially contemplated) but it is likely that aspects of the implementation of these projects might be impacted.
PRT partners	s6(a)	s6(a)

<p>Alliance management / coalition cohesion</p>	<p>New Zealand has made public commitments to Bamyān to 2014</p> <p>s6(a) and s9(2)(g)(i)</p>	<p>A withdrawal in 2013 following a declaration of a “successful transition” would be consistent with the recent approach from the US and ISAF to the transition process and is likely to be seen positively as a show of confidence to the transition process. PRTs in other provinces have also recently indicated intentions to close during 2012 and 2013.</p> <p>s6(a) and s9(2)(g)(i)</p> <p>Our increase in funding to develop Bamyān’s energy and agricultural sectors also highlights our ongoing commitment until 2014.</p>
<p>Withdrawal management</p>	<p>s9(2)(g)(i)</p> <p>There will be tremendous pressure on ISAF transport corridors, support networks and logistic hubs in 2014. The NZ PRT could possibly find itself towards the back of the logistic support queue, potentially delaying and complicating our withdrawal process.</p> <p>s9(2)(g)(i)</p>	<p>A withdrawal in 2013 provides a significant advantage in that the PRT would avoid the time of greatest pressure on ISAF transport corridors, support networks and logistic hubs, especially if we declare our intentions early. This is likely to facilitate a quicker / smoother withdrawal as NATO/ISAF logistic support for extraction is more likely to be available for withdrawal in 2013.</p> <p>We also have a reasonable understanding of what the security / political situation in Afghanistan might look like by the end of 2013, offering some confidence of a steady and predictable withdrawal process.</p>
<p>Finance</p>	<p>The cost of the withdrawal operation is not yet known. It is reasonable to expect, however, that the cost will be the same whether the PRT is withdrawn in 2013 or 2014.</p>	<p>A 2013 withdrawal would save on the cost of operating the PRT for one full year, that is, if the PRT were to be retained until Oct 2014.</p>

Annex B: PRT withdrawal in late 2013 – process and consequences

Withdrawal process

Withdrawal of the PRT in late 2013 would see the following major activities occur:

1. CRIB 20, which is about to deploy, would continue operations as planned, including continuing the development of the Provincial Quick Reaction Force (PQRF). It would mentor the first platoon of the PQRF (which has just completed training) through joint patrols in the north-east, and it will train the second platoon of the PQRF. Closure/handover of some of the smaller Forward Operating Bases (FOB) would commence.

s6(a) and 6(d)

The first platoon of the PQRF would be ready for operational deployment. By April 2013, the second platoon would have completed operational mentoring, the third platoon would have completed training (if the province has received the expected boost in Afghan National Police numbers), and the Provincial Governor's Close Protection Party (CPP) would have been trained. Mentoring of the Office of Central Coordination – Provincial (OCC-P) would continue.

3. In April 2013, CRIB 21 would be succeeded by a Theatre Extraction Team (TET); it would focus on the extraction of the materiel and equipment and closure of Kiwi Base. The TET would include a NZDF force protection element, and all operations would be centred on Kiwi Base. LAVs would not likely be withdrawn until the last NZDF elements leave, in order to retain maximum force protection. Mentoring of the OCC-P would continue. Two platoons of the PQRF would be operational, the third would require additional mentoring, but this is not likely to be completed before NZDF elements depart Bamyān. NZDF elements will be withdrawn from Bamyān by the end of Oct 2013.

Consequences

Security

On current planning, by October 2013 Bamyān will have a comparatively well trained local police force, including a PQRF that can respond to complex insurgent attacks in the province

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

Development

1. Renewable Energy Programme (REP)

The design phase for the REP is now complete with the implementation component of the project out for tender (due to close 7 May). As part of the tender process, potential implementers are expected to assume no security or logistical reliance on the PRT as part of their implementation planning and that the construction phase of the REP will be completed by the end of 2013, followed by a one year support phase planned through 2014.

Assessment: While we are yet to receive market feedback, given the requirement for contractors to operate independently of the PRT, current planning would allow a 2013 withdrawal of the PRT.

2. Agricultural Support Programme (ASP)

New Zealand's three year ASP is expected to be completed late 2014. Implementation by NZ firm Prime Consulting is progressing with the rollout of the tractor component almost complete. While Prime currently receives support from the NZ PRT, it has indicated an 'in principle' commitment (security dependent) to continue to implement the ASP in the event the PRT leaves.

Assessment: We are investigating the financial implications for the ASP should there be a decline in the security situation in 2014 and a commensurate need for added security measures. Nevertheless, current ASP planning would allow a 2013 withdrawal of the PRT.

3. Bamyan airport

Japan has formally approved a US\$15.5 million package to upgrade the airport. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) is expected to manage the construction through sub-contractors, with the project expected to commence in 2013 and be completed in 2014. It is not known what impact the PRT's closure in 2013 would have on UNOPS management of the project.

Assessment: The impact of a 2013 withdrawal of the PRT would need to be tested with Japan/UNOPS but is unlikely to impact on UNOPS management of the project.

4. Development support to the North East

Planning for the specific development projects in north-east Bamyan is currently underway. Should the decision be made to withdraw the PRT in 2013, the PRT will only implement projects which can be completed both within 2012/2013.

Assessment: Current planning would allow a 2013 withdrawal of the PRT

5. Other development support

Other development support (e.g. health and education) is managed by non-governmental organisations and does not rely on the PRT.

Assessment: Current planning would allow a 2013 withdrawal of the PRT.

Governance

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

Although the NZPRT continues to work to improve local governance, there is no one project that would require the ongoing presence of the PRT beyond 2013.

s6(a)

Partners

PRT partners currently rely on the *in extremis* security and logistical support provided by the NZDF s6(a), s6(b)(ii) and s9(2)(g)(i)