



Cabinet

Minute of Decision



CAB Min (09) 28/13

Copy No: 2)

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.

Review of New Zealand's Commitments to Afghanistan

Portfolios: Foreign Affairs / Defence

On 10 August 2009, Cabinet:

Background

1 noted that in February 2009, Cabinet:

- 1.1 agreed to continue New Zealand's current security effort in Afghanistan for one year from 1 October 2009 until 30 September 2010;
- 1.2 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:
 - 1.2.1 developments in Bamyan Province and other parts of Afghanistan;
 - 1.2.2 moves towards Afghanistan and the re-balancing of military and non-military effort by other international contributors;

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

- 1.3 noted that the findings of the review, including the financial implications of recommended options, would be reported to relevant Ministers by mid-2009;

[CAB Min (09) 5/3A]

Report on Review of New Zealand's Commitment to Afghanistan

- 2 noted the report on the *Review of New Zealand's Commitment to Afghanistan*, attached to the paper under CAB (09) 439;
- 3 noted that the threat to international peace and security that justified New Zealand's original commitment to Afghanistan has not been neutralised;

- 4 **noted** that the report sets the direction of a strategic shift in New Zealand's engagement with Afghanistan, and a framework for implementation and oversight of the changes;
- 5 **noted** that this strategy involves continuing New Zealand's participation in the international mission in Afghanistan in the medium term (up to five years);
- 6 **noted** that, consistent with the new international strategy for Afghanistan, New Zealand's efforts during the medium term will be refocused away from military engagement, and towards development and governance assistance, with the concept of operations of the Banyan PRT amended to facilitate the transfer of lead responsibility for security in Bamyán Province to the Afghan National Police;
- 7 **endorsed** the strategy outlined in paragraphs 4 to 6 above;

New Zealand contribution to the Provincial Reconstruction Team

- 8 8.1 **agreed** that the drawdown of the PRT begin before the current mandate ends in September 2010;
- 8.2 **directed** officials to develop a roadmap for exiting the PRT in the medium term (including the financial implications of the proposals) and report to the Cabinet External Relations and Defence Committee by late 2009;
- 9 **agreed in principle**, subject to the report referred to in paragraph 8.2 above, to the extension of the current mandate of all New Zealand Defence Force elements in Afghanistan until September 2011, on the understanding that drawdowns will occur with each PRT rotation from September 2009;
- 10 **agreed** that a process to identify a partner country to take over lead responsibility for the PRT as New Zealand draws down be conducted expeditiously;
- 11 **agreed** that other military capabilities should be deployed to Afghanistan from time to time during and after withdrawal from the PRT to signal New Zealand's continuing commitment to the international strategy. s6(a), s6(b)(i)


Out of scope

Official Development Assistance focus

- 13 **agreed** that Official Development Assistance (ODA) allocations to Afghanistan be progressively increased, with a greater emphasis on agriculture, and continuing high priority given to education and health;
- 14 **noted** that an ODA programming mission being undertaken later in 2009 will develop specific and costed proposals for the future;
- 15 **agreed** that Bamyán Province be the focus of New Zealand's development assistance;
- 16 **noted** that the future of the New Zealand Police's deployment to Bamyán Province is currently under review by the Commissioner of Police;

- 17 17.1 **agreed** that, to facilitate the realignment of the New Zealand effort towards development, and to help bring greater coherence and co-ordination to international assistance to Banyan Province, a development advisor be appointed to the PRT;
- 17.2 **noted** that the estimated cost of appointing a development advisor is \$0.157 million in 2009/10, and \$0.628 million over the next two financial years, and will be met from within the existing baseline of either Vote Foreign Affairs and Trade or Vote ODA, depending on the precise definition of the role;
- 18 **noted** that a suitably qualified appointee to the development advisor position might also serve concurrently as the civilian co-leader of the PRT to symbolise the change of focus, and to align New Zealand with the practice in other PRTs;

Out of scope



Whole of government oversight and management

- 20 **agreed** that the whole of government effort in Afghanistan be overseen by a group of Ministers with relevant portfolios who will receive regular and formal reporting on progress toward the achievement of New Zealand's objectives for future engagement with Afghanistan.

Secretary of the Cabinet

Reference: CAB (09) 439

Distribution: (see over)

Distribution:

Prime Minister
Chief Executive, DPMC
Director PAG, DPMC
Director DESG, DPMC
Director EAB, DPMC
Director, GCSB
Director, NZSIS
Minister of Finance
Secretary to the Treasury
Minister of Police
Commissioner of Police
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Minister of Defence
Secretary of Defence
Chief of Defence Force
Associate Minister of Defence

Released under the Official Information Act 1982