



Cabinet

CAB Min (09) 28/13

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Minute of Decision

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Review of New Zealand's Commitments to Afghanistan

Portfolios: Foreign Affairs / Defence

On 10 August 2009, Cabinet:

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE	
INWARDS MAIL	
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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 Bamyán 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;
 - 1.2.3 the policies of the new United States (US) Administration and its expectations of partners;
 - 1.2.4 addressing options for smaller, more focussed military contributions beyond the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) commitment, and international benefits derived from ongoing engagement;
- 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;

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- 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 Bamyan PRT amended to facilitate the transfer of lead responsibility for security in Bamyan 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, with the nature and timing of such deployments be determined to maximise the benefits for key bilateral relationships, especially the US and Australia;
- 12 **noted** in this context the separate, but related, proposal to deploy the New Zealand Special Air Service Group to Afghanistan in the near future [CAB Min (09) 28/22];

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 Bamyan Province be the focus of New Zealand's development assistance;
- 16 **noted** that the future of the New Zealand Police's deployment to Bamyan Province is currently under review by the Commissioner of Police;

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- 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 Bamyan 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;

Representation in Afghanistan

- 19 19.1 **agreed** that, for up to two years, the diplomatic accreditation to Afghanistan be transferred from Tehran, Iran to an officer stationed in Kabul, who will co-ordinate and manage at the political level the reorientation of New Zealand's engagement in Afghanistan;
- 19.2 **noted** that the cost of the officer stationed in Kabul will be \$0.445 million in 2009/10 and \$0.891 million in 2010/11, and will be met from within the existing baselines of Vote Foreign Affairs and Trade;

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.

Rebecca Kitteridge

Secretary of the Cabinet

Reference: CAB (09) 439

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