

#7207



Cabinet

CAB Min (11) 2/7

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Minute of Decision

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Additional Item: Extension of New Zealand Special Air Service Deployment to Afghanistan (Operation Watea)

Portfolios: Defence

On 1 February 2011, Cabinet:

- 1 **noted** that on 10 August 2009, Cabinet approved the deployment of up to 71 personnel (including up to 70 New Zealand Special Air Service (NZSAS) personnel and associated New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) support staff **PSR(R)2, PSR(R)3**) and associated equipment to Kabul, Afghanistan, for up to 18 months from late September 2009 [CAB Min (09) 28/22];
- 2 **noted** that the NZSAS has been partnering the Afghan Ministry of Interior's counter-terrorism Crisis Response Unit (CRU), conducting direct action tasks against insurgent networks, and providing operational support to NZDF elements in Afghanistan;
- 3 **noted** that the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) assesses that the CRU requires a further 18 to 24 months of dedicated partnering support before it is up to the standard needed to operate independently on a sustainable basis, and that the ISAF has enquired informally whether New Zealand could continue its support;
- 4 **noted** that the proposed 12 month extension of the NZSAS deployment would:
 - 4.1 assist the Afghan government and the ISAF in meeting their requirements for ongoing training support and mentoring to Afghan National Security Forces;
 - 4.2 allow for operational support to all other NZDF elements within Afghanistan, as well as VIP protection and **PSR(S)2, PSR(S)3**
 - 4.3 enhance the reputation of New Zealand as a valued and trusted defence partner with NATO, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia;
- 5 **noted** that the NZDF's policy on the handling of detainees has not changed: any persons arrested during partner-enabled CRU operations would be processed by the CRU and other Afghan authorities in accordance with Afghan law, and if NZSAS personnel were to detain any persons, they would comply with standard ISAF operating procedures and international law;

- 6 noted that the NZSAS has sufficient manpower resources to sustain a force element (NZSAS^{PSR(R)2, PSR(R)3} of up to 35 personnel in Afghanistan and meet concurrent counter-terrorism, Rugby World Cup 2011, and regional security commitments;
- 7 noted that the NZDF strategic military threat level for Kabul and Afghanistan overall is assessed as **HIGH**;
- 8 agreed to the extension of Operation Watea in Afghanistan for up to 12 months from April 2011, including 32 NZSAS personnel and^{PSR(R)2, PSR(R)3}
- 9 noted that the Vote Defence Force costs of extending Operation Watea are \$11.318 million (\$3.215 million in 2010/11 and \$8.103 million in 2011/12);
- 10 noted that the Vote Defence Force costs falling in 2010/11 will be absorbed as a result of appropriation transfers from 2009/10, and that, if permitted, future appropriation transfers from 2010/11 would provide for anticipated costs for Operation Watea in 2011/12 to be absorbed;
- 11 agreed to appropriate an additional^{PSR(R)2, PSR(R)3} Vote Communications Security and Intelligence, comprising:
 - 11.1 \$^{PSR(R)2, PSR(R)3} for the financial year 2010/11;
 - 11.2 \$^{PSR(R)2, PSR(R)3} for the financial year 2011/12;
 - 11.3 \$^{PSR(R)2, PSR(R)3} for the financial year 2012/13 and outyears;
- 12 approved the following changes to appropriations in Vote Communications Security and Intelligence, for the continual provision of intelligence support by the GCSB to deployed NZDF elements, with a corresponding impact on the operating balance and debt:

| Vote Communications Security and Intelligence Minister Responsible for the GCSB | \$m – increase/(decrease) | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------------------|
| | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 & outyears |
| Intelligence and Security Departmental Expenses and Capital Expenditure: (Funded by revenue Crown) (Funded by Capital Injection) | PSR(R)2 PSR(R)3 | | | | | | |
| Total Operating | | | | | | | |
| Total Capital | | | | | | | |
| Total Vote: Communications Security and Intelligence | | | | | | | |

- 13 noted that \$^{PSR(R)2, PSR(R)3} of the increase in appropriations in the financial years 2011/12 to 2015/16 is to cover^{PSR(R)2, PSR(R)3} in appropriation in 2010/11 in paragraph 12 above;
- 14 agreed, as this^{PSR(R)2, PSR(R)3} in each of the financial years 2011/12 to 2015/16;

- 15 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.

Rebecca Kitteridge
Secretary of the Cabinet

Reference: Paper entitled *Extension of New Zealand
Special Air Service Deployment to Afghanistan
(Operation Watea)*

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