

HON RON MARK, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Opportunity to Participate in the Australian Command of the Combined Maritime Forces Combined Task Force 150 – Release of Cabinet Documents

December 2019

This publication provides documents on Cabinet's September 2019 decision to contribute five NZDF personnel to the Australian-led Combined Task Force 150 in Bahrain for four months from December 2019.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee minute of decision: *Opportunity to Participate in the Australian Command of the Combined Maritime Forces Combined Task Force 150* [ERS-19-MIN-0028]
- the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee paper: *Opportunity to Participate in the Australian Command of the Combined Maritime Forces Combined Task Force 150* [ERS-19-SUB-0028].

This pack has been released on the Ministry of Defence website, available at:

www.defence.govt.nz/publications.

It has been necessary to withhold certain information in accordance with the following provisions of the Official Information Act 1982. Where information is withheld, the relevant sections of the Act are indicated in the body of the document.

Information is withheld where making it available would be likely to prejudice:

- the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand [section 6(a)]



Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee

Minute of Decision

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.

Opportunity to Participate in the Australian Command of the Combined Maritime Forces Combined Task Force 150

Portfolios **Foreign Affairs / Defence**

On 10 September 2019, the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee:

- 1 **noted** that the Combined Maritime Forces Combined Task Force 150 is a longstanding, 16-nation naval partnership to uphold maritime security in the Middle East, to which New Zealand has contributed since 2010;
- 2 **noted** that on 4 July 2017, the previous government approved the deployment of a Command Team for four months to the Combined Maritime Forces in 2019/2020 as part of New Zealand's longstanding commitment to international maritime security efforts, and authorised the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence to make adjustments to this deployment [ERD-17-MIN-0020];
- 3 **noted** that in 2018, the Chief of Defence Force agreed to Australia's request to replace the scheduled Command Team rotation, to coincide with the deployment of its frigate *HMAS Toowoomba*;
- 4 **noted** that the Australian Defence Force has offered the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) five positions in the Command Team, which would be based in the Combined Maritime Forces headquarters in Bahrain;
- 5 **approved** the contribution of five NZDF personnel to the Australian-led Combined Task Force 150 for four months from December 2019;
- 6 **noted** that:
 - 6.1 this approval extends to the Combined Task Force 150 tasking only;
 - 6.2 should there be a change in the activity of the Combined Task Force, officials will report back to Ministers;
- 7 **noted** that the total estimated cost of this deployment from December 2019 to 19 March 2020, plus a force integration period with the Australian Defence Force during September and October 2019, is assessed as \$0.315 million;

- 8 **noted** that the estimated costs of \$0.315 million can be met within the existing Vote Defence Force: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests MCA.

Janine Harvey
Committee Secretary

Present:

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern (Chair)
Hon Kelvin Davis
Hon Grant Robertson
Hon Andrew Little
Hon David Parker
Hon Stuart Nash
Hon Ron Mark

Hard-copy distribution:

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Minister of Defence

Officials present from:

Office of the Prime Minister
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Defence

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Chair, Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee

OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE AUSTRALIAN COMMAND OF THE COMBINED MARITIME FORCES COMBINED TASK FORCE 150

Proposal

1. To seek approval for five New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel to supplement the Australian-led Command Team of the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) Combined Task Force (CTF) 150 in Bahrain from December 2019 to March 2020, with pre-deployment planning activities commencing in mid-September 2019.

Background

2. Combined Task Force 150 (CTF150) was established in 2001 as one of a trio of Task Forces¹ created to promote security and stability, counter transnational crime and encourage regional maritime cooperation in an area which spans 2 million square miles across the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman and the Indian Ocean (see map in Annex A). CTF150 is a 16-nation naval partnership² which is specifically tasked to stem the incidence of maritime terrorism by countering the illegal transfer of people, narcotics, weaponry or charcoal, the profits of which are a known source of funding for criminal and terrorist networks. As a secondary priority the partnership conducts anti-piracy activities within the CTF150 area of operation.

3. Under a decision made by the previous Government, New Zealand was originally scheduled to provide the main body of the CTF150 Command Team for four months from December 2019³ [CAB-17-MIN-0347 refers]. However, in 2018 Chief of Defence Force (CDF) agreed to Australia's request to replace New Zealand in its Command Team rotation, to coincide with the deployment of its frigate HMAS Toowoomba to the Middle East. As part of the Australian deployment, the NZDF was offered the opportunity to fill five positions within the CTF150 Command Team. Canada will also be represented in the Command Team.

4. While the adjustment to the initial full-team deployment represents a reduction in the number of New Zealand personnel (from approximately 30 to five), officials consider that the deployment of a supplement to the Australian-led team does fulfil the initial intent for the Command Team. The positions which have been offered

1 The other two task forces consist of CTF151, which is focussed on counter piracy operations, and CTF152 which is dedicated to maritime security engagement activities in the Persian Gulf.

2 CTF150 participating nations have included Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Republic of Korea, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States.

3 The provision of a 30 person Command Team was approved in CAB-17-MIN-0347 for 2019/2020.

span the Command Team responsibilities, and enable the NZDF personnel to operate in a significant multinational organisation and engage with partner countries.

s6(a)

5. This proposal, if approved, would mean that New Zealand would not be expected to provide a Command Team in 2020, excepting possible short-notice requests.

Comment

New Zealand's national security interests

6. As a maritime trading nation, the preservation of maritime security and freedom of navigation are essential for New Zealand's national security interests. CMF is an established multinational coalition with strong international support and clear objectives. New Zealand's support for this coalition has been a demonstration of our commitment to multilateral maritime security and stability in an area of global strategic importance.

7. Participation in CMF remains consistent with New Zealand's broader national interests, including the preservation of maritime security, and a commitment to cooperating with a network of partners to counter transnational threats which erode the international rules-based order.

8. New Zealand has contributed personnel and platforms to maritime security activities in the Middle East since 1995, and to CTF150 since 2010 (see Annex B). Currently, NZDF have two personnel deployed in the CMF headquarters. Previous deployments of the Anzac frigates and P-3K2 Orion maritime surveillance aircraft have resulted in a number of high-profile successes against transnational organised crime and smuggling activity, including the *HMNZS Te Kaha* interdiction of 257 kilograms of heroin in 2015, and the assistance of a P-3K2 in seizing over 1,500 kilograms of heroin in 2017.

9. NZDF has also commanded CMF Task Forces in 2011 and 2014, and had a Deputy Commander in the UK-led Command Team in CTF150 in 2018. These leadership roles enhance NZDF experience in command positions, and increase the ability of defence force personnel to work with a range of countries in a dynamic environment. This proposed CTF150 supplement deployment is an opportunity for NZDF personnel to refine our interoperability with Australian (and Canadian) counterparts.

10. New Zealand's provision of expertise into the Command Team roles would be a valued and credible contribution to fulfilling the objectives of CTF150, particularly when New Zealand has limited capacity to continue our pattern of platform deployments to the CMF for the foreseeable future due to asset availability constraints.

The Command Team roles and responsibilities

11. The Command Team is based in the CMF headquarters in the US Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT), Bahrain. In its totality, the Command Team is comprised of around 30 personnel responsible for coordinating surface and air platforms, identifying potential illegal smuggling activity from intelligence provided by maritime surveillance aircraft, and tasking surface platforms to interdict vessels of interest, in order to stem the flow of transnational crime between the Gulf and the East African coast.

12. New Zealand has been offered positions within the Command Team which span the scope of headquarter responsibilities: Deputy Commander, Assistant Maritime Planner, Current Operations Intelligence Officer, Assistant Battle Watch Captain, and Communications Operator (see position descriptions in Annex C). These are high-value roles and provide significant operational experience for personnel.

13. Should New Zealand not agree to participate in the Command Team, Australia will need to fill these roles or find another country that would be prepared to fill the roles.

International Maritime Security Construct

14. The US and UK are in the process of establishing the International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC). The IMSC headquarters are expected to be [redacted] s6(a) [redacted] in Bahrain, [redacted] s6(a) [redacted]. Both the UK and US have [redacted] s6(a) [redacted] emphasised that there is no intent to conflate the IMSC with CMF; the two will remain independent entities and CMF will continue to fulfil its discrete objectives.

15. While the IMSC will assume a similar structure to CMF, [redacted] s6(a) [redacted] the two entities differ significantly in their size, scope and objectives. CMF is a longstanding and established coalition with broad-based support. With 33 contributing nations (16 to CTF150), CMF covers 3.2 million square miles and works to stem the incidence of narcotic and weapon smuggling from the Gulf to Africa, and the smuggling of charcoal from Africa to the Gulf (the profits from which are used to fund terrorist networks). In contrast, the IMSC is being stood up in response to a specific threat to commercial shipping, with a much smaller area of operation. While the size and structure of CMF is likely to be maintained due to the consistent smuggling activities between the Gulf and Africa, [redacted] s6(a) [redacted]

16. New Zealand personnel in CTF150 will be solely committed to the command of that operation; they would not be involved with any tasking that platforms in CTF150 undertake outside of the Task Force.

[redacted] s6(a) [redacted]

17. While it is not anticipated that there be any adjustment to the established coalition activities of CTF150, should the activities, scope or intent of the Task Force move outside of agreed policy settings, officials will revert to Ministers.

18. Advice on the IMSC will be provided to Ministers separately, initially in a submission. [REDACTED] s6(a)

Implications for New Zealand's ability to still deploy to our immediate region should an emergency arise

19. The NZDF contribution to the CTF150 does not impact on New Zealand's ability to deploy to our immediate region in the event of an emergency.

Threat Assessment

20. NZDF Defence Intelligence assesses the operational threat to NZDF personnel deployed to Bahrain as [REDACTED] s6(a)

Legal considerations

21. The maritime security operations conducted by the CTF are supported by a wide range of legal authorities. In addition to international law, each unit of CTF150 is bound by the law of its flag State. This means that the range of authorities and powers that each contributing State exercises, varies. The NZDF staff of CTF150 are not to direct any component of CTF150 to take action which would breach NZ law. The Australian Commander would be required to report any action by contributing nations which appears to them to be contrary to applicable international law or inconsistent with that nation's declared Rules of Engagement (ROE) to the authority capable of taking disciplinary action in respect of it. It is not intended to issue separate NZDF ROE for the command element as the NZDF personnel deployed would be shore-based and not armed.

22. The New Zealand Force Commander (as Deputy Commander of the CTF) will at times have tactical control over CTF150 vessels, which is akin to coordination between these vessels. There are no coalition ROE for CTF150. Each contributing state conducts operations using national ROE. If the commanding officer of a platform within CTF150 decided that the direction of the New Zealand commander did not accord with his or her flag State's position, the commanding officer would have the right to refuse to comply with the direction. Any action taken by the foreign vessel or the ship's company while in CTF150 cannot be attributed to New Zealand under international law.

23. The NZDF command element would be predominantly based [REDACTED] s6(a) in Bahrain, during the deployment. [REDACTED] s6(a)

Consultation

24. This paper has been prepared by the Ministry of Defence, the New Zealand Defence Force and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (NAB, NSG, PAG) and the Treasury were consulted.

Financial Implications

25. The estimated cost of the deployment is \$0.315m. The expenditure to be funded from Crown Revenue is \$0.315m and the estimated costs can be met from the existing funding for Vote Defence Force: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests MCA. The following table sets out the expenditure and funding arrangements for this deployment.

Vote Defence Force	NZ \$million					Total
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	
Estimated cost of proposed deployment	0.315	-	-	-	-	0.315
Total funded from existing appropriation: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests	0.315	-	-	-	-	0.315
Additional Funding Required	-	-	-	-	-	-

Publicity

26. The outcome of this paper would be announced via a press release by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defence. A redacted version of this Cabinet paper will then be proactively released.

27. Officials would recommend that, should Cabinet elect to proceed with this deployment, the announcement of New Zealand's commitment to the CTF150 be messaged as part of a consistent and ongoing commitment to Middle East maritime security, and countering transnational organised crime, including smuggling and piracy.

Recommendations

28. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence recommend that the Committee:

1. **note** that the Combined Maritime Forces Combined Task Force 150 is a longstanding, 16-nation naval partnership to uphold maritime security in the Middle East, to which New Zealand has contributed since 2010;
2. **note** that in 2017 the deployment of a Command Team for four months to the Combined Maritime Forces in 2019/2020 was approved as part of our longstanding commitment to international maritime security efforts, and authorised the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence to make adjustments to this deployment [CAB-17-MIN-0347];

3. **note** that Chief of Defence Force agreed to Australia's request to replace our scheduled Command Team rotation, to coincide with the deployment of its frigate *HMAS Toowoomba*;
4. **note** that the Australian Defence Force has offered the New Zealand Defence Force five positions in the Command Team, which would be based in the Combined Maritime Forces headquarters in Bahrain;
5. **approve** the contribution of five personnel to the Australian-led Combined Task Force 150 for four months from December 2019;
6. **note** that this approval extends to the Combined Task Force 150 tasking only, and should there be a change in the activity of the Combined Task Force then we will revert to Ministers;
7. **note** that the total estimated cost of this deployment from December 2019 to 19 March 2020, plus a force integration period with the Australian Defence Force during September and October 2019, is assessed as \$0.315m; and
8. **note** that the estimated costs of \$0.315m can be met within the existing Vote Defence Force: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests MCA.

Authorised for lodgement

Rt Hon Winston Peters
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon Ron Mark
MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Annex A: Map of CTF 150 and IMSC Areas of Operation



Indian Ocean: CTF 150 & IMSC Areas of Operation

Combined Task Force (CTF) 150 and International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC) Areas of Operation

Current as of Aug 2019

s6(a)



Includes data sourced from Collins Bartholomew. Digital Map Data © Collins Bartholomew Ltd (2019)

Annex B: Previous New Zealand Contributions to Combined Maritime Forces

The New Zealand Defence Force has previously contributed or currently contributes to Combined Maritime Forces objectives as follows:

Regular/Ongoing Contributions (2010 – present)

- Naval **personnel seconded** to Australian, United States, United Kingdom or Singaporean military vessels (2010 – present).
- Naval and Airforce **staff officers to the Combined Maritime Forces Headquarters** (2013 – present) in planning and operations coordination roles.

2018

- Naval staff **officer to Singapore-led Command Team CTF151**
- Naval staff **officer to United Kingdom-led Command Team CTF150**
- Naval staff **officer to Japanese-led Command Team CTF151**

2017

- A **P-3K2 Orion aircraft** to the Combined Maritime Forces, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, European Union Naval Forces and the United States Navy Central Command
- An Airforce staff officer to Combined Maritime Forces Headquarters in the role of **Chief Air Coordination Element**

2015

- Naval staff **officers to Japanese-led Command Team CTF151**
- A **naval frigate** to the Combined Maritime Forces, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and European Union Naval Forces

2014

- New Zealand **Command Team** of CTF151
- A **P-3K2 Orion aircraft** to the Combined Maritime Forces, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, European Union Naval Forces and the United States Navy Central Command (2014/2015)

2013

- Naval staff **officers to Danish-led Command Team CTF151** (2013/2014)
- A **naval frigate** to the Combined Maritime Forces, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and European Union Naval Forces (2013/2014)

2012

- Naval staff officer to **Singapore-led Command Team CTF151**

2011

- New Zealand **Command Team** of CTF151
- Naval staff officers to **Australia-led Command Team CTF150** (2011/2012)
- Naval staff officer to **Singapore-led Command Team CTF151**

2010

- Naval staff officer to **Singapore-led Command Team CTF151**

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Annex C: Command Team Supplement Position Descriptions

Position	Qualifications/Competencies	Position Description
<p>Deputy Commander /Chief of Staff</p> <p>CAPT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major Force Element Command experience Previous headquarters experience Previous experience working within a battle staff or task group s6(a) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represent NZDF interests within CTF150. Represent CTF150 at CMF briefings/ meetings. Command of CTF150 in the absence of Commander CTF150. Provide specialist advice to Commander CMF and CTF150 staff on the capabilities and effective operational employment of assets assigned to CTF150. Develop and maintain professional relationships with counterparts within CMF, to assist with seamless operations and exercise planning and to promote engagement and inter-operability of CMF, Gulf region and Civilian Merchant shipping representatives. Conduct Key Leader Engagement meetings as identified by CMF Strategic Communications to enhance regional strategic capacity building and CMF/CTF relationship building. Act as Senior National Officer (SNO) Op PUKEKO in the absence of SNO PUKEKO. Provide NZDF SITREP input to SNO Op PUKEKO (weekly). Produce End of Tour reports for NZDF personnel assigned to CTF150 Command.
<p>Assistant Maritime Planner</p> <p>CDR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Warfare Officer Experience – post ship Operations Officer Operational battle staff /task group experience Proficient operational planning skills s6(a) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputise for Lead Maritime Planner in their absence. Develop, review and present planning options as required. Provide specialist advice to Commander CTF150 and CMF HQ branch staff on the capabilities and effective operational employment of assets assigned to CTF150. Manage and attend meetings and lead the process to develop plans and options for surge and focused operations using the Joint Military Appreciation Process (JMAP). Co-ordinate with CMF Current and Future Operations in the development of CTF150-led operation planning. Liaise with CTF151/ 152 operations and plans staff to ensure coherence of combined planning to maximise asset assignment and availability between CTF Commands.

<p>Current Operations Intelligence Officer</p> <p>LT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intelligence Officer qualified • Previous experience working within a battle staff or task group. • Sound understanding of CMF intelligence architecture • s6(a) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputise for Lead Intelligence Officer in their absence. • Identify and submit Requests for Information (RFI) and conduct follow up action when required. • Attend meetings and assist in developing plans and options for focused and surge operations using the Joint Military Appreciation Process (JMAP). • Collate and review CTF150 assigned forces reports and returns for daily operation briefings. • Conduct daily CTF150 operations briefings. • Analyse operational data and information to provide Commander CTF150 with intelligence options and assessments – including trend analysis. • Provide Intelligence and Operations briefs for CMF and CTF Commands.
<p>Assistant Battle Watch Captain</p> <p>PO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ship combat team operator • Proficient Information Systems skills • s6(a) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and report current and ongoing activities of assigned CTF150 forces to provide accurate and prompt information, allowing command to be kept informed. • Manage common operating picture system assigned to CTF150 • Act as conduit of information to pass Commander CTF150 tasking and intent instructions to assigned forces. • Provide Commander CTF150 with current operations briefings. • Provide CTF150 operation activity reporting to CMF battle watch and CTF151/ 152 staff for combined CMF briefings and to ensure operations are co-ordinated or de-conflicted. • Co-ordinate with CMF Legal Advisor during vessel boarding's to ensure legal integrity of operations is maintained.
<p>CIS Operator</p> <p>PO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIS qualified and experienced • Sound understanding of CMF CIS architecture. • s6(a) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check that CIS equipment is operated and connected to coalition networks in accordance with relevant instructions, Certification and Accreditation Documentation and Standard Operating Procedures. • Provide advice and support to Commander CTF150 on policy and technical matters relating to coalition networks.

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