

Chair

Cabinet External Relations and Defence Committee

PROPOSAL TO INCREASE NEW ZEALAND'S CONTRIBUTION IN AFGHANISTAN

Proposal

This paper seeks Cabinet's agreement to increase New Zealand's ten person contribution to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Mission in Afghanistan by an additional three personnel. This would comprise of two personnel to the Resolute Support Mission Headquarters in Kabul to June 2019, and one person to the United Kingdom-led Afghan National Army Officer Academy to June 2018.

Background

2. New Zealand has made a significant contribution to Afghanistan's stability since 2001 through successive military deployments (a total of over 3,500 personnel have served) and development assistance (almost NZ\$100m in total). Since 2013 New Zealand's military support has been provided through a contribution to the United Kingdom-led Afghan National Army Officer Academy. The Academy is a component of the Resolute Support Mission, which was a follow-on from the International Security Assistance Force.

3. The Resolute Support Mission is a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation non-combat mission to train, advise and assist Afghan security forces and institutions. It currently consists of around 13,000 personnel. The Officer Academy is a highly reputed and important part of the mission, providing training and mentoring to senior members of the Afghan Army.

4. In 2013, Cabinet agreed to contribute eight personnel to the Officer Academy [CAB Min (13) 43/17 refers]. In May 2016, Cabinet agreed to extend the New Zealand Defence Force contribution to the Officer Academy to 30 June 2018. Cabinet also agreed to increase the size of New Zealand's contribution from eight personnel to ten, in response to a request from the United Kingdom [Cab Min 15 (11/6) refers].

5. In light of ongoing fragility in Afghanistan, and an enduring risk to Afghan national security posed by terrorist organisations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation has assessed that a continued and refocussed international effort is required. To be effective, this will require an increase in coalition forces on the ground. Several countries have already indicated they will increase their troop levels.

6. On behalf of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, in May 2017 the United States made a formal request to New Zealand to increase our contribution in Afghanistan by an additional two personnel to Resolute Support Mission Headquarters in Kabul. Separately, the United Kingdom has requested that New Zealand provide an additional person to the Officer Academy to provide physical training instruction.

7. [redacted] section 9(2)(f)(iv)

Comment

Situation in Afghanistan

8. The security situation in Afghanistan is deteriorating and 2017 is likely to be one of Afghanistan's most challenging years since the United States-led intervention in 2001

[redacted] section 6(a)
[redacted] Increased activity is also expected from other resident terrorist groups, [redacted] section 6(a)
[redacted] should the security environment continue to deteriorate. [redacted] section 6(a)

9. Support from the international community is crucial to keep Afghanistan and its current National Unity Government viable. [redacted] section 6(a)

[redacted] A collapse would have profoundly negative security consequences for the region and in countering terrorism.

10. The National Unity Government has developed a four year roadmap, which depends on ongoing international assistance, to boost the capacity of its own security forces. This was the context for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's recent decision to strengthen efforts in Afghanistan and invite troop contributing nations to do the same. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is looking to increase troop contributions to the Resolute Support Mission by a total of approximately 3,000 personnel.

Resolute Support Mission contributions

11. The majority of countries which have forces in the Resolute Support Mission intend to continue their contributions, and a number are already proposing increases. This includes the United Kingdom (from 500 to 600) [redacted] section 6(b)(i)

[redacted] Australia has recently decided to increase its commitment by 30 (to total 300 personnel), remaining the second largest non-North Atlantic Treaty Organisation troop contributor. The United States is carrying out an Afghan review and has stated it will continue its support of the Resolute Support Mission. The results of this review are yet to be announced but it could result in an increase of [redacted] section 6(b)(i) United States personnel.

Rationale for extending our contribution

12. Along with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and other partners, we recognise the need to continue support to Afghanistan's economic and security sectors and to ensure the country does not become a safe-haven for terrorism again. While the proposed contribution of three personnel is small, it is proportionate and would be in keeping with New Zealand's security interests, specifically our global contributions to counter-terrorism efforts. Further, any contribution would be valued by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, the United States, and the United Kingdom. It also underscores our reputation as a committed contributor towards peace and stability in the region.

New Zealand Defence Force positions

13. The New Zealand Defence Force is able to provide suitable personnel to meet the requests for support. The United Kingdom request is for a Physical Training Instructor mentor of Senior Non Commissioned Officer or Warrant Officer rank. This mentoring role would be conducted alongside New Zealand's current contribution at the Officer Academy. If approved, it would commence in September 2017 and be incorporated into the extant mandate for support to the Officer Academy (hence the proposed end date of June 2018). The role would be responsible for mentoring and advising all Afghan Physical Training Instructors within the Physical Training Department.

14. Following the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation / US request for two additional personnel to Resolute Support Mission Headquarters, and guidance from relevant Ministers, New Zealand provisionally bid for staff officer positions at a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation force generation conference on 13 June. These bids remain subject to Cabinet approval.

15. The first position is a Section Head role at the rank of Colonel. This officer would primarily be responsible for overseeing operational planning to integrate and coordinate 'Train, Advise and Assist' activities across Afghanistan prior to implementation.

16. The second position is a Staff Assistant senior Warrant Officer appointment within the Training Branch of the Resolute Support Mission Headquarters. This position requires a subject matter expert on training and instruction who would provide advice to the Head of Training Branch. These two positions in Headquarters will also provide New Zealand with better situational awareness of both the Mission and the overall situation in Afghanistan, and lift New Zealand's profile within the mission.

17. The two Headquarters positions, if approved would commence by November 2017. section 9(2)(f)(iv)

Logistical support

18. section 6(a)

Logistical support is also provided from the United Kingdom as part of a Technical Arrangement between the United Kingdom Ministry of Defence and the New Zealand Defence Force.

Legal Framework

19. The mission is authorised through United Nations Security Council Resolution 2189 of 12 December 2014. The overarching legal framework for the Resolute Support Mission is provided by a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation – Afghanistan Status of Forces Agreement. This defines the terms and conditions under which North Atlantic Treaty Organisation forces are deployed, as well as the activities they are authorised to carry out.

20. The formal mechanism for New Zealand's participation in the Resolute Support Mission is an Arrangement signed on 24 December 2014 between New Zealand and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, which approved the participation of New Zealand as an operational partner. This was refreshed on 28 October 2016 as an Agreement for an increase from eight to ten deployed New Zealand Defence Force mentors and support personnel to the Afghan National Army Officer Academy at Quargha. This was facilitated via an exchange of letters between the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Secretary General and New Zealand's Ambassador in Brussels.

21. This Agreement would need to be updated to cover New Zealand's participation in the Resolute Support Mission to include the additional three personnel and to reflect the extension of New Zealand's commitment to the Mission. This could be facilitated via a further exchange of letters.

Operational Risk and Risk Management Strategies including security and force protection arrangements

22. **Locations.** section 6(d)

The Officer Academy is located approximately ten kilometres from central Kabul within the Marshal Fahim Defence University complex. section 6(d)

23. **Physical Protection.** The Resolute Support Mission Headquarters is surrounded by extensive protective walls and layered surveillance systems. section 6(d)

24. **Force Protection.** section 6(d)

25. **Accommodation.** section 6(d)

26. **Movement.** section 6(d)

27. **Operational Response Capability.** section 6(d)

28. **Medical Response Capability.** Medical support is comprehensive within Kabul and is provided by Coalition Forces, including aero-medical evacuation.

Consultation

29. 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 and the Treasury were informed.

Financial Implications

30. The estimated cost of the deployments is \$0.694M.

31. There is a shortfall in funding available from current appropriations of \$0.694M, because funding for Vote Defence Force: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests is fully committed for 2017/18 and 2018/19 as a result of existing mandated missions.¹ The additional funding required of \$0.694M is proposed to be charged against the tagged Operating Contingency established as part of Budget 17 for Military Operations in Support of a Rules-based International Order.

32. The following table sets out the expenditure and funding arrangements for this deployment:

Vote Defence Force	NZ \$million				
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Total
Estimated cost of proposed deployment	0.389	0.305	-	-	0.694
Total funded from existing appropriation: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests	-	-	-	-	-
Additional Funding Required	0.389	0.305	-	-	0.694

33. The following table sets out the impact for this deployment on the tagged Operating Contingency established as part of Budget 17 for Military Operations in Support of a Rules-based International Order:

Vote Defence Force	NZ \$million				
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Total
section 9(2)(f)(iv)					
section 9(2)(f)(iv)					
section 9(2)(f)(iv)					
Funding for this mission	0.389	0.305	-	-	0.694

¹ The mandated missions include Iraq, the wider Middle East region, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the United Nations Truce Supervision.

section 9(2)(f)(iv)

Publicity

34. If Cabinet approves the increase, we intend to issue a joint press release outlining New Zealand's continued commitment.

Recommendations

35. The Ministers of Defence and of Foreign Affairs recommend that the Committee
1. **note** the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan and the need to strengthen and refocus international support to Afghan forces;
 2. **section 6(a)**
 3. **note** that the United States has made a request on behalf of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation for New Zealand to increase our contribution in Afghanistan by an additional two personnel to Resolute Support Mission Headquarters in Kabul;
 4. **agree** to increase our contribution by an additional two staff officers to Resolute Support Mission Headquarters out to 30 June 2019;
 5. **note** that the United Kingdom has separately requested that New Zealand provide an additional person to the Afghan National Army Officer Academy as a Physical Training Instructor Mentor;
 6. **agree** to increase our contribution to the Afghan National Army Officer Academy by an additional person out to 30 June 2018;
 7. **section 9(2)(f)(iv)**
 8. **section 9(2)(f)(iv)**
 9. **agree** that the international arrangements for New Zealand's participation in the Resolute Support Mission be amended to reflect the increase in personnel;
 10. **note** the total estimated cost of the deployments is assessed as \$0.694M;
 11. **note** that there is a shortfall of \$0.389M in 2017/18 and \$0.305M in 2018/19 that is not able to be met within existing baselines;
 12. **approve** the following changes to appropriations to give effect to the policy decision in recommendations [4 and 6] above with a corresponding impact on the operating balance;

Vote Defence Force Minister of Defence	NZ \$m – increase / (decrease)				
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 & out-years
Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure					
Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests MCA	0.389	0.305	-	-	
Departmental Output Expense:					
Military Operations in Support of a Rules-Based International Order (funded by revenue Crown)					

13. agree that the additional expenses required in 2017/18 and 2018/19 under recommendation 11 above be a charge against the tagged Operating Contingency established as part of Budget 17 for Military Operations in Support of a Rules-based International Order; and
14. agree that the proposed change to appropriations for 2017/18 above be included in the 2017/18 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply.

Hon Mark Mitchell

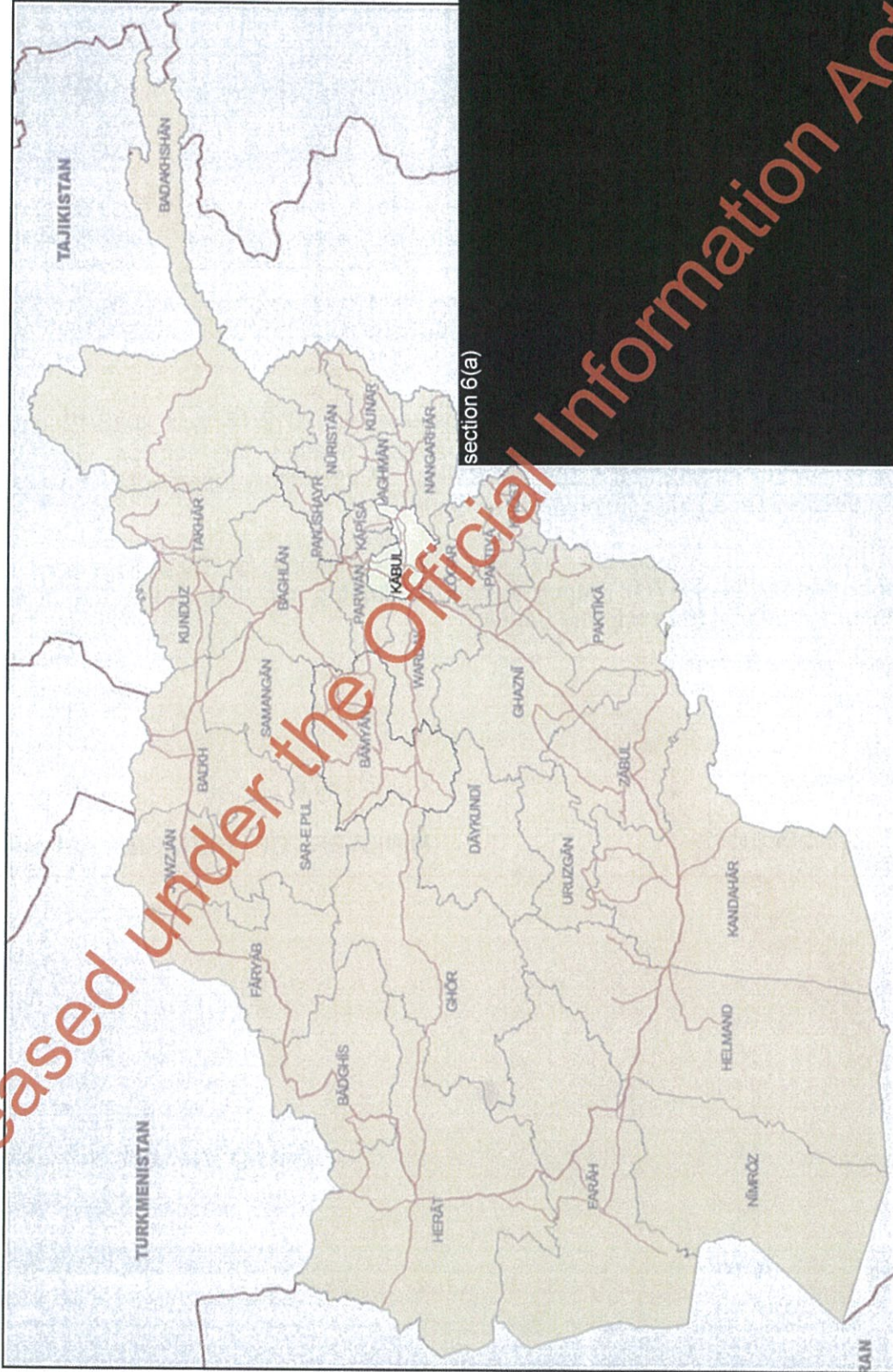
MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Hon Gerry Brownlee

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Annex 1: Map of Afghanistan section 6(a)



section 6(a)