

## **HON RON MARK, MINISTER OF DEFENCE**

### **Afghanistan Strategic Reassessment: Options for New Zealand's Future Approach – Release of Cabinet Documents**

July 2019

This publication provides papers associated with Cabinet's June 2019 decision to change the focus of the deployment of New Zealand Defence Force personnel in Afghanistan, contributing up to 13 personnel for 18 months out to 31 December 2020.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- June 2019 Cabinet minute of decision *Afghanistan Strategic Reassessment: Options for New Zealand's Future Approach* [CAB-19-MIN-0261]
- May 2019 consideration by the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee *Afghanistan Strategic Reassessment: Options for New Zealand's Future Approach* [ERS-19-MIN-0008]
- The associated Cabinet paper *Afghanistan Strategic Reassessment: Options for New Zealand's Future Approach* [CAB-19-SUB-0261 and ERS-19-SUB-0008]

This pack has been released on the Ministry of Defence website, available at: [www.defence.govt.nz/publications](http://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)].

Information is also withheld in order to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any department or organisation in the course of their duty [section 9(2)(g)(i)]. No public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding this information.



# Cabinet

## 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.*

### Afghanistan Strategic Reassessment: Options for New Zealand's Future Approach

**Portfolios** Foreign Affairs / Defence

On 4 June 2019, following reference from the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee, Cabinet:

- 1 **noted** that New Zealand's contributions to Afghanistan:
  - 1.1 advance national security interests by playing New Zealand's part to ensure that Afghanistan is not used again as a safe haven for terror groups to plot, launch and inspire global terror attacks;
  - 1.2 support the maintenance of the international rules-based order;
  - 1.3 support international humanitarian efforts to achieve long term peace, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan;
- 2 **noted** that short of a political agreement, [REDACTED] s6(a) the current high levels of violent conflict in Afghanistan are likely to continue over the coming years;
- 3 **noted** that the legal basis for New Zealand's involvement in the Resolute Support Mission is through the Arrangement between New Zealand and NATO and the Status of Forces Agreement between NATO and Afghanistan, and that the Mission is endorsed by United Nations Security Council Resolution 2189;
- 4 **noted** that the unmitigated operational threat for New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel in Afghanistan [REDACTED] s6(a) and that the Operational Risk Management Strategies apply to the Mission;
- 5 **agreed** to stay and diversify in Afghanistan, contributing up to 13 NZDF personnel to Afghanistan for eighteen months out to 31 December 2020, subject to paragraph 6 below. These personnel will be made up of up to 11 personnel at the Afghanistan National Army Officer Academy (decreasing to six by December 2019), two personnel at the Resolute Support Mission Headquarters, and up to three personnel supporting women, peace and security, and reconciliation and reintegration work within the Resolute Support Mission;

6 [REDACTED] s6(a)

- 7 **noted** the high risks around additional non-military contributions to Afghanistan, and that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade will provide limited stabilisation funding from within existing baselines;
- 8 **agreed** that New Zealand should bid for three roles relating to women, peace and security, and reconciliation and reintegration efforts as part of the NATO Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan;
- 9 **agreed** that the NZDF may temporarily exceed the Cabinet-mandated personnel numbers for New Zealand's Afghanistan deployments (including the two personnel at Resolute Support Mission Headquarters) for the purposes of command reconnaissance, rotation, and extraction of forces from theatre [CAB-18-MIN-0346];
- 10 **noted** that the Chief of Defence Force will inform the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defence and the Minister of Foreign Affairs in advance whenever Cabinet-mandated personnel numbers are exceeded for the reasons set out in paragraph 9 above;
- 11 **noted** that the total estimated cost of the decision referred to in paragraph 5 above to be funded from Crown Revenue from 1 July 2019 to 31 December 2020 is assessed as \$3.142 million;
- 12 **noted** that the estimated costs in 2019/20 and 2020/21 for the decision referred to in paragraph 5 above can be met from within the existing Vote Defence Force: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests MCA.

Michael Webster  
Secretary of the Cabinet

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**Hard-copy distribution:**

Prime Minister  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Minister of Defence



# Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee

## Minute of Decision

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### Afghanistan Strategic Reassessment: Options for New Zealand's Future Approach

Portfolios Foreign Affairs / Defence

On 28 May 2019, the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee **agreed to recommend** that Cabinet:

- 1 note that New Zealand contributions to Afghanistan:
  - 1.1 advance national security interests by playing New Zealand's part to ensure that Afghanistan is not used again as a safe haven for terror groups to plot, launch and inspire global terror attacks;
  - 1.2 support the maintenance of the international rules-based order;
  - 1.3 support international humanitarian efforts to achieve long term peace, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan;
- 2 note that short of a political agreement, [REDACTED] s6(a) the current high levels of violent conflict in Afghanistan are likely to continue over the coming years;
- 3 note that the legal basis for New Zealand's involvement in the Resolute Support Mission is through the Arrangement between New Zealand and NATO and the Status of Forces Agreement between NATO and Afghanistan, and that the Mission is endorsed by United Nations Security Council Resolution 2189;
- 4 note that the unmitigated operational threat for New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel in Afghanistan [REDACTED] s6(a) and that the Operational Risk Management Strategies apply to the Mission;
- 5 agree to stay and diversify in Afghanistan, contributing up to 13 NZDF personnel to Afghanistan for eighteen months out to 31 December 2020, subject to paragraph 6 below. These personnel will be made up of up to 11 personnel at the Afghanistan National Army Officer Academy (decreasing to six by December 2019), two personnel at the Resolute Support Mission Headquarters, and up to three personnel supporting women, peace and security, and reconciliation and reintegration work within the Resolute Support Mission;

6 [REDACTED] s6(a)

- 7 note the high risks around additional non-military contributions to Afghanistan, and that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade will provide limited stabilisation funding from within existing baselines;
- 8 agree that New Zealand should bid for three roles relating to women, peace and security, and reconciliation and reintegration efforts as part of the NATO Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan;
- 9 agree that, if unsuccessful in its bid for the women, peace and security, and reconciliation and reintegration roles, Ministers with power to act (the Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Finance, and Minister of Defence) will consider further advice on other emerging opportunities for a New Zealand contribution to these issues in Afghanistan;
- 10 agree that the NZDF may temporarily exceed the Cabinet-mandated personnel numbers for New Zealand's Afghanistan deployments (including the two personnel at Resolute Support Mission Headquarters) for the purposes of command reconnaissance, rotation, and extraction of forces from theatre [CAB-18-MIN-0346];
- 11 note that the Chief of Defence Force will inform the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defence and the Minister of Foreign Affairs in advance whenever Cabinet-mandated personnel numbers are exceeded for the reasons set out in paragraph 10 above;

### Financial implications

- 12 note that the total estimated cost of the decision referred to in paragraph 5 above to be funded from Crown Revenue from 1 July 2019 to 31 December 2020 is assessed as \$3.142 million;
- 13 note that the estimated costs in 2019/20 and 2020/21 for the decision referred to in paragraph 5 above can be met from within the existing Vote Defence Force: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests MCA.

Janine Harvey  
Committee Secretary

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#### Present:

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

#### Officials present from:

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

#### Hard-copy distribution:

Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Minister of Defence

Chair, External Relations and Security Committee

## **AFGHANISTAN STRATEGIC REASSESSMENT: OPTIONS FOR NEW ZEALAND'S FUTURE APPROACH**

### **PROPOSAL**

1. This paper reassesses New Zealand's approach to Afghanistan and, should Government wish to continue making contributions to the coalition effort, provides Cabinet with some options.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

2. New Zealand has been involved in Afghanistan since 2001. Our contributions have evolved in response to changes in the security situation and the international community's response. Currently, New Zealand contributes 13 personnel to the NATO Resolute Support Mission (RSM), which is a non-combat mission to train, advise and assist the Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces (hereafter: 'Afghan forces').

3. New Zealand contributions to international peace and security operations are based on a range of factors. These factors include national security, foreign, economic, legal and defence policy issues, which we consider within the context of our national values, international reputation, and the independence of our foreign policy. In Afghanistan, the principles of primary importance are national security and maintaining the international rules-based order.

4. These principles should be weighed against New Zealand having been deployed in Afghanistan for nearly 20 years. Accordingly, this paper provides Ministers with four options to either withdraw or continue New Zealand's contribution. The options reflect New Zealand's principles and values, s6(a)

5. Contributions across three key areas where we assess a s6(a) benefit are:

- Extensions to the two roles we hold in RSM Headquarters as these roles afford New Zealand our most central and visible positions within the mission;
- New roles to support emerging efforts in women, peace and security initiatives, which highlight the importance the Government attaches to this work; and,
- An ongoing but reducing contribution to the Afghanistan National Army Officer Academy (ANAOA), which remains an important institution for training future male and female leaders in the Afghan Army.

6. Each of the options prepared for Government would result in a decrease from the current contribution of 13 personnel.

7. The central rationale behind New Zealand contributions remains the need to counter the threat posed by the long-term aspirations of terrorist groups still operating in Afghanistan. [REDACTED] s6(a)

## BACKGROUND

8. In September 2018, Cabinet agreed to continue the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) contribution of 11 personnel to the ANAOA, out to 30 September 2019 [CAB-18-MIN-0450 refers]. Cabinet also agreed that a strategic reassessment of New Zealand's contributions to Afghanistan would be provided to Cabinet by June 2019. This would consider New Zealand's presence in Afghanistan, including possible future military and civilian contributions as well as other options [REDACTED] s6(a)

9. In August 2017, Cabinet agreed to a new and separate contribution of two NZDF personnel to the RSM Headquarters, out to 30 June 2019 [CAB-17-MIN-0437 refers].

10. This strategic reassessment reflects on the history of New Zealand's engagement in Afghanistan, with the details of the conflict and our contribution to it contained in Annex A. It considers the current and possible future security situation in Afghanistan, and, through the application of New Zealand's deployment principles, reassesses our presence there. In doing so, it takes account of a range of factors including the threat to international peace and security by terrorist groups within Afghanistan, the positive but uncertain peace negotiations under way between the US and the Taliban, and the likely trajectory of our international partners' engagement in Afghanistan. [REDACTED] s6(a)

The reassessment suggests that, [REDACTED] s6(a)

[REDACTED] a possible refocus on emerging issues such as women, peace and security – would best reflect New Zealand's national security interests.

[REDACTED] s6(a)

11. [REDACTED] s6(a) Ever since the launch of US-led counter-terrorism operations in October 2001, extremist groups in Afghanistan have been denied a safe haven to plan or launch externally directed terrorist attacks. This has been a priority at all stages of the international community's transition in Afghanistan, from the original combat operations through to the ongoing stabilisation, reconstruction and training missions. [REDACTED] s6(a)

12. With Afghan forces' gradual assumption of responsibility for security in Afghanistan which was complete by the end of 2014, [REDACTED] s6(a)

[REDACTED] Although the Government currently controls 55 percent of territory, including all major population centres, the Taliban (and to a lesser extent the other extremist groups) have achieved incremental territorial gains [REDACTED] s6(a)

[REDACTED] s6(a)

14. Negotiations are currently under way, with the US having directly engaged the Taliban to pursue an end to the conflict. [REDACTED] s6(a)

15. The Taliban's engagement in these negotiations is taking place against the backdrop of a sustained international commitment to Afghanistan. At the NATO Summit in Brussels in July 2018, RSM-contributing nations affirmed their ongoing support for military contributions to Afghanistan and changed to favouring a conditions-based withdrawal rather than setting timelines, [REDACTED] s6(a)

[REDACTED] s6(a)



17. The RSM grew to 41 member-nations in 2018, with the inclusion of the UAE and Qatar, who have yet to finalise arrangements for the deployment of personnel. No nations have left the mission in recent years, and some have significantly expanded their contributions; Denmark has grown its contribution of military personnel by over 60 percent since 2017, now sitting at 155 personnel, and the United Kingdom has doubled its contribution over that period to 1,100 personnel.

18. See the table below for information on countries' personnel contribution numbers.








































	Albania	135		Germany	1.300		Portugal	193
	Armenia	121		Greece	12		Romania	733
	Australia	300		Hungary	93		Slovakia	36
	Austria	17		Iceland	3		Slovenia	8
	Azerbaijan	120		Italy	895		Spain	67
	Belgium	82		Latvia	42		Sweden	29
	Bosnia-Herzegovina	63		Lithuania	50		North Macedonia	47
	Bulgaria	159		Luxembourg	2		Turkey	593
	Croatia	106		Mongolia	233		Ukraine	16
	Czech Republic	357		Montenegro	29		United Kingdom	1.100
	Denmark	155		Netherlands	160		United States	8.475
	Estonia	39		New Zealand	13			
	Finland	24		Norway	54			
	Georgia	870		Poland	303		Total	17.034

Table 1 - International troop contributions to RSM as at March 2019

s6(a)

## REASSESSING NEW ZEALAND'S ENGAGEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN: BACK TO FIRST PRINCIPLES

20. Advice on New Zealand contributions to international peace and security operations considers a range of factors including national security, foreign, economic, legal, and defence policy issues, as well as operational considerations. These factors sit in the wider context of our national values, international reputation and the independence of our foreign policy. For the purposes of assessing the appropriateness of New Zealand's ongoing engagement in Afghanistan, the following principles – many of which are articulated in the Strategic Defence Policy Statement – are relevant:

- the existence of a clear, legitimate and compelling case for international involvement (which goes to issues of national and collective security, and the values New Zealand stands for internationally);
- the legal basis for our involvement and the consistency of any proposed actions with international law;
- the risks to the safety and security of New Zealand personnel; and
- implications for New Zealand's ability to still deploy to our immediate region.

*Is there a clear, legitimate and compelling case for international involvement?*

21. The case for continued international involvement in Afghanistan continues to rest on the imperative to prevent Afghanistan's re-emergence as a safe haven for extremist groups planning externally-directed terrorist attacks. Prior to 2001, the Taliban Government allowed extremist groups such as al-Qaeda to base themselves in Afghanistan, from where they planned and carried out terrorist attacks on a global scale, most notably the 9/11 attacks on the US. As noted above, however, ever since the US-led counter-terrorism operations began in October 2001, terrorist activity in Afghanistan has been largely contained domestically, with extremist groups using terrorism to combat the Afghan forces and international military forces operating inside Afghanistan (and each other).

s6(a)

24. The international rules-based order is fundamental to both global stability and to New Zealand's security. As a beneficiary of international stability and functioning global trade, New Zealand has an obligation to support and protect the rules-based order. This includes being willing to support the prevention and resolution of conflict, especially to prevent violent extremism to ensure that the collective strength of international law is not eroded. s9(2)(g)(ii)

25. Beyond the counter-terrorism focus, a major component of the international commitment to Afghanistan has been the provision of large-scale humanitarian assistance to support social and economic development. Although Afghanistan remains one of the world's least developed countries, international assistance has enhanced the quality of life of Afghan citizens. Ongoing military support to the Afghan forces remains at the heart of this: Kabul struggles to improve social and economic outcomes in areas where they do not exercise territorial control. While not a driver of our current engagement in Afghanistan, supporting these broader humanitarian outcomes would be a secondary benefit of any extension to New Zealand's presence in country.

26. International assistance has had a particularly positive impact for Afghanistan's women and girls, although the progress achieved is extremely fragile. Women and girls are likely to bear the brunt of any reduction in the international community's commitment

to Afghanistan, with the comparative strength of the Taliban at the negotiating table expected to have real repercussions for their long-term social, economic, educational and legal prospects (with knock-on implications for the acceptability and longevity of any negotiated outcome). As outlined below, a number of international partners are increasing their focus on women, peace and security in Afghanistan. Should Ministers decide to continue and refocus New Zealand's engagement in Afghanistan, this area of work provides an opportunity to make a measurable difference.

*The legal basis for the deployment and consistency with international law*

27. The overarching legal framework for the RSM is provided by a NATO–Afghanistan Status of Forces Agreement. This provides the legal basis for the presence and activities of NATO forces in Afghanistan and defines the terms and conditions under which they are deployed. The mission has also been endorsed by the United Nations Security Council in Resolution 2189 of 12 December 2014.

28. The formal mechanism for New Zealand's participation in the Resolute Support Mission is an Agreement which was signed by way of Exchange of Letters on 28 October 2016, which approved the participation of New Zealand as an operational partner. In 2017, this was updated by way of an Exchange of Letters between the New Zealand Ambassador in Brussels and NATO to reflect the increase in the number of personnel and time-period of New Zealand's contribution to the Resolution Support Mission. New Zealand would need to notify NATO of proposed changes to New Zealand's contribution as specified in the 2016 Exchange of Letters.

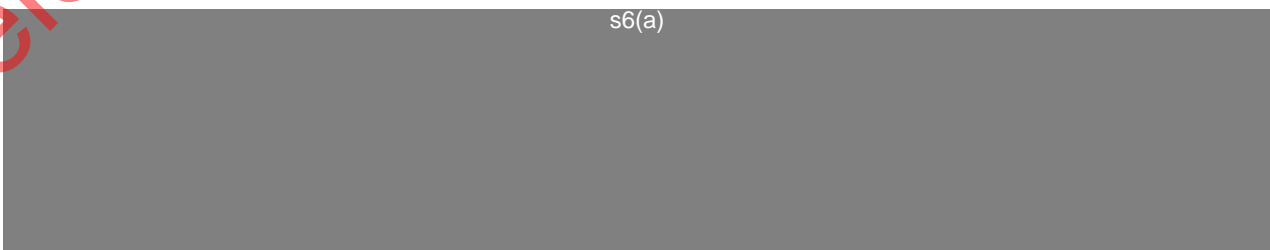
*Risks to the safety and security of New Zealand personnel*

29. The unmitigated operational threat level for Afghanistan is assessed by Defence Intelligence s6(a). In order to mitigate the risk to NZDF personnel deployed to the region, a range of physical security measures are employed, coupled with the completion of an increased level of operational training and preparedness by personnel prior to deployment. With these measures, the residual risk is considered acceptable by Defence. However, risks to civilian personnel deployed independently of NZDF are considered s6(a) and unable to be independently or sufficiently mitigated. Deployment of civilian personnel is not recommended.

*Implications for New Zealand's ability to still deploy to our immediate region*

30. None of the options envisioned below would prevent New Zealand from deploying to the Pacific should an emergency arise. The numbers proposed for deployment are very small and thus would have no impact on our ability to deploy the NZDF in the Pacific or elsewhere.

**FROM PRINCIPLES TO OPTIONS**



33. In compiling these options, and reflecting the Cabinet mandate of September 2018, officials have also investigated a broad range of possible non-military contributions to Afghanistan. Ultimately, these have proven to be limited given the significant security constraints for civilian activities in Afghanistan (with associated safety risks and financial costs), and the limited availability of appropriate expertise in New Zealand. Such contributions, and their constraints, have been outlined at paragraphs 58-61 for completeness.

### **New Zealand's options for contributing in Afghanistan**

34. Four options are identified for New Zealand's future approach to military contributions in Afghanistan. Each of these options would result in a decrease from the current contribution of 13 personnel. Further detail on roles is expanded at Annex B. The options are:

- **Option 1: Immediate Exit** – withdraw the NZDF contribution of 13 personnel in Afghanistan by 30 September 2019;
- **Option 2: Phased Exit** – Continue current NZDF contributions in Afghanistan for the next year, with a phased withdrawal by 30 June 2020;
- **Option 3: Stay and Diversify** – continue current NZDF contributions to Afghanistan (with a naturally reducing presence at ANAOA) out to 30 June 2020, in addition to new roles supporting women, peace and security, and reconciliation and reintegration; or,
- **Option 4: Stay and Refocus** – Transition out of current NZDF contributions to ANAOA by March 2020, remain in RSM Headquarters roles and commit to new roles supporting women, peace and security, and reconciliation and reintegration, out to 30 June 2020.

35. Both “stay” options would involve a further review of our overall deployment to Afghanistan within twelve months instead of setting a fixed withdrawal date now for all New Zealand's contributions.

### **Options for exit**

#### *Option 1: Immediate Exit*

36. Under option 1, NZDF personnel would withdraw from Afghanistan as soon as possible. s6(a)

This withdrawal would require up to three months to hand over roles to personnel from other countries, organise the departure of New Zealand personnel and complete end of deployment formalities. Under this option, the deployment of NZDF personnel to Afghanistan would be completed by 30 September 2019. This option is not recommended.



*Option 2: Phased Exit by June 2020*

40. Under option 2, New Zealand would extend its military contributions to the ANAOA and the RSM Headquarters by one year, with full withdrawal to occur by 30 June 2020. Under this option, New Zealand's contribution to the ANAOA would decrease over the second half of 2019, with our current contribution of up to 11 personnel reducing to eight personnel by August 2019, and then to six personnel by December 2019. This reduction is a result of the ANAOA's positive results and the increasing self-sufficiency of the Afghan forces, which has allowed the Academy to progress to a "train the trainer" model and which has also led to a reduction in the number of international trainers and mentors required there.<sup>2</sup>

41. Contributing to training roles in the ANAOA utilises well-developed and available skill sets within the NZDF. This includes highly developed inter-cultural communication skills, which enhance the effectiveness of NZDF trainers in overseas deployments.

s6(a)

42. Under this option, New Zealand's contribution to the RSM Headquarters would continue in the two roles we currently fill until June 2020. The two RSM Headquarters

<sup>2</sup> The restructure does not affect the personnel requirements for Real Life Support, and particularly for coalition force protection, which the UK will continue to lead. This is not expected to change in the foreseeable future.

roles are also well suited to NZDF's training skill-set, and further provide New Zealand with a higher capacity to engage with, [redacted] wider RSM activities.

s6(a)

### Options to continue in Afghanistan

#### *Option 3: Stay and Diversify*

45. Under option 3, New Zealand would continue its military contributions in Afghanistan out to 30 June 2020, with a further review of the deployment rather than a fixed withdrawal date at the end of this period. [redacted]

s6(a)

[redacted] As with option 2, New Zealand's contribution to the ANAOA would decrease from up to 11 personnel to six personnel by December 2019.<sup>3</sup>

46. Contributing at ANAOA continues to provide New Zealand with a well-scoped, secure and efficient option for military deployments in Afghanistan. Our deployments to ANAOA have and continue to play an important part in educating personnel that will become future leaders within the Afghan Army in technical skills, but also with New Zealand's leadership values and ethos. Importantly, New Zealand's contributions have also assisted in the training of nearly 250 female graduates.

47. As outlined in paragraph 40, the ANAOA has recently undergone a restructure reducing requirements for international personnel, as a result of the Afghan forces becoming more self-sufficient at the Academy as a result of the training provided. It is expected that this trajectory of declining requirement for international support at the ANAOA will continue [redacted]

s6(a)

48. Under option 3, our current contribution of two personnel to the RSM Headquarters would continue, in roles as set out at Annex B. The two RSM positions represent tried and tested appointments that contribute to the overall stability of our contribution, [redacted]

s6(a)

The positions form a key aspect of the

<sup>3</sup> NZDF personnel numbers at ANAOA will decrease from up to 11 to eight by August 2019 and will decrease further to six by December 2019. The six remaining ANAOA roles are described in more detail at Annex B.

Headquarters team that contributes to wider Afghanistan campaign planning, management and execution. They provide [redacted] s6(a) wide access to all aspects of the RSM. This access provides insight into the wider Afghanistan political and security situation, which helps inform advice to government, and provides for a high level of situational awareness around the campaign direction and security situation in regard to force protection of New Zealand personnel.

49. It is recommended that, if New Zealand is to continue contributing at the RSM Headquarters, both current roles are retained. This is important for continuing to make an impactful contribution, demonstrating New Zealand's engagement with the mission.

[redacted] s6(a)

50. Under this option the NZDF would also deploy up to three personnel into roles associated with women, peace and security, and reconciliation and reintegration into within the RSM Headquarters in Kabul. [redacted] s6(a)

[redacted]

[redacted] s6(a)

51. The overall WPS agenda is built around enhancing the involvement and experiences of women in peace and security operations, as articulated in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. The WPS agenda in Afghanistan can be seen as falling under three main pillars: (1) increasing the role of women in the security forces, (2) increasing the role of women in the peace process, and (3) protection of women in conflict zones.

52. Supporting the role of women in the security forces is something New Zealand has already contributed to through our presence at ANAOA. [redacted] s6(a)

[redacted] Increasing the role of women in any future peace process in Afghanistan is crucial, as women need to be involved if a lasting peace agreement is to be achieved [redacted] s6(a)

[redacted] Protection of women in conflict zones is of paramount importance, and protection of women in Afghanistan society more broadly is also a key concern, with 87 percent of victims of physical to psychological violence in Afghanistan being women. New Zealand support for WPS initiatives through RSM would be consistent with our established international positions on gender initiatives and the role of women. Contributing to these roles in Afghanistan will also enable NZDF to grow its expertise in this emerging area of security and post-conflict resolution.

53. With respect to reconciliation and reintegration, the RSM concept is to work with Afghan Government institutions to support them in monitoring, coordinating and planning their approaches to a post-peace agreement. RSM has introduced new positions to advance reconciliation and reintegration planning in Afghanistan [redacted] s6(a)

[redacted] s6(a)



54. NZDF's contribution of up to three personnel<sup>5</sup> to support women, peace and security and reconciliation and reintegration work cannot be guaranteed until New Zealand has engaged with NATO and has been successful in its competitive bidding process for roles. Should Ministers agree to a New Zealand contribution to these new roles, officials would pursue them in the bidding process. Bidding will occur in early June, and if successful, NZDF would be in a position to deploy personnel into these roles in September. [REDACTED] s6(a)

[REDACTED] If unsuccessful, however, officials could investigate other emerging opportunities for engagement on women, peace and security in Afghanistan, and present a further paper to Ministers with powers to act (Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Finance, and Minister of Defence).

#### *Option 4: Stay and Refocus*

55. Under option 4, New Zealand would refocus its contribution in Afghanistan from supporting ANAOA training, to supporting WPS and reconciliation and reintegration efforts through the RSM. The deployment of NZDF personnel to the ANAOA would be concluded by the end of the current rotation cycle, with all NZDF personnel withdrawn from the ANAOA no later than March 2020. New Zealand would continue our contribution of two personnel to the RSM Headquarters, and would deploy up to three personnel into roles associated with women, peace and security, and reconciliation and reintegration, dependent on the outcomes of the competitive NATO bidding process as per option 3.



#### **Non-military contributions in Afghanistan**

58. MFAT is responsible for any financial and non-military contributions in Afghanistan. New Zealand's 14-year, NZ\$100 million programme of development assistance (primarily delivered in Bamyan Province through the NZ-led Provincial Reconstruction Team) concluded in 2017. Our ongoing contribution of US\$2 million per year to the UNDP-administered Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA).

59. In terms of the financial contributions to Afghanistan, New Zealand's annual Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) contribution of US\$2M to the LOTFA is comparatively small. Our contribution goes toward the achievement of Pillar 1 of LOTFA VII, which is ensuring that the Afghan Ministry of Interior has the capability to manage a





transparent, accountable, auditable and efficient payroll system that enables the Government of Afghanistan to provide timely salary payments to Afghan National Police and Central Prisons Department personnel. This is committed from existing baselines until the end of 2020 regardless of which military deployment option is chosen by Government.

s6(a)

## Rotations

62. In 2012, Cabinet agreed to the inclusion in all NZDF deployment papers of a provision that allows the NZDF to temporarily exceed Cabinet-mandated personnel numbers for the purposes of command reconnaissance, rotation, and extraction of forces in and out of theatre [CAB Min (12) 10/2 refers]. In July 2018, Cabinet noted the 2012 decision and agreed that this convention will continue [CAB 18-MIN-0346 refers]. The Chief of Defence Force will inform the Minister of Defence, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Prime Minister in advance whenever a rotation, extraction or command reconnaissance is planned above mandated numbers. This provision also applies to the two NZDF personnel deployed to Resolute Support Mission Headquarters.

## CONSULTATION

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

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

64. The estimated cost of the four options are summarised in the table below

Estimated cost of proposed deployments	NZ \$million				
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total
Option 1: Withdraw before the end of 2019	0.066	-	-	-	<b>0.066</b>
Option 2: Pathway to Exist – Withdraw by 30 June 2020	1.536	-	-	-	<b>1.536</b>

Option 3: Evolve our contribution	1.960	-	-	-	<b>1.960</b>
Option 4: Refocused Contribution	1.459	-	-	-	<b>1.459</b>

65. The expenditure for the selected option will be funded from Crown Revenue and the estimated costs in 2019/20 can be met from within the existing funding for Vote Defence: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests MCA.

66. There is no impact from this deployment on the tagged Operating contingency established as part of Budget 17 for Military Operations in Support of a Rules-based International Order.

**PUBLICITY**



68. In the event that Government selects options 3 or 4, the outcome of this paper is able to be announced subsequent to the Cabinet decision.

69. We recommend the outcome of this paper be announced alongside the concurrent decision on Iraq and potentially Operation Gallant Phoenix (OGP).

**PROACTIVE RELEASE**

70. A redacted version of this Cabinet paper will be proactively released following the public announcement.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

71. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence recommend that Cabinet:

1. **Note** that New Zealand contributions to Afghanistan:
  - a. advance our national security interests by playing our part to ensure that Afghanistan is not used again as a safe haven for terror groups to plot, launch and inspire global terror attacks;
  - b. support the maintenance of the international rules-based order; and,
  - c. support international humanitarian efforts to achieve long term peace, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan.
2. **Note** that short of a political agreement, s6(a) the current high levels of violent conflict in Afghanistan are likely to continue over the coming years.

3. **Note** the legal basis for New Zealand's involvement in the Resolute Support Mission through the Arrangement between New Zealand and NATO and the Status of Forces Agreement between NATO and Afghanistan, and that the Mission is endorsed by UNSCR 2189.
4. **Note** the unmitigated operational threat for NZDF personnel in Afghanistan s6(a) and the Operational Risk Management Strategies applied to the mission.
5. **Agree** to either:
- a. Option 1 *Exit* from Afghanistan, and withdraw all 13 NZDF personnel from Afghanistan by 30 September 2019. Over the three months it will take to complete this withdrawal, New Zealand will continue to contribute up to 11 personnel at the Afghanistan National Army Officer Academy and two personnel at the Resolute Support Mission Headquarters.
- OR
- b. Option 2 *Phased Exit* from Afghanistan, contributing up to 13 NZDF personnel to Afghanistan for one year out to 30 June 2020, with withdrawal of NZDF personnel to occur by this date. These personnel are made up of up to 11 personnel at the Afghanistan National Army Officer Academy (decreasing to six by December 2019) and two personnel at the Resolute Support Mission Headquarters.
- OR
- c. Option 3 *Stay and diversify* in Afghanistan, contributing up to 13 NZDF personnel to Afghanistan for one year out to 30 June 2020. These personnel are made up of up to 11 personnel at the Afghanistan National Army Officer Academy (decreasing to six by December 2019), two personnel at the Resolute Support Mission Headquarters, and up to three personnel supporting women, peace and security and reconciliation and reintegration work within RSM.
- OR
- d. Option 4 *Stay and Refocus* in Afghanistan, withdrawing from ANAOA by 31 March 2020 but contributing up to five NZDF personnel to Afghanistan for one year out to 30 June 2020. These five personnel are made up of two personnel at the Resolute Support Mission Headquarters, and up to three personnel supporting women, peace and security and reconciliation and reintegration work within RSM.
6. **Note** s6(a) that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade will provide limited stabilisation funding from within existing baselines.
7. **Agree** that, if Cabinet agrees to Options 3 or 4, New Zealand should bid for three roles relating to women, peace and security and reconciliation and reintegration efforts as part of the NATO RSM in Afghanistan.

8. **Agree** that, if unsuccessful in its bid for the women, peace and security and reconciliation and reintegration roles, Ministers with power to act (Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Finance, and Minister of Defence) will consider further advice on other emerging opportunities for a New Zealand contribution to these issues in Afghanistan.
9. **Agree** that the New Zealand Defence Force may temporarily exceed the Cabinet-mandated personnel numbers for New Zealand's Afghanistan deployments (including the two personnel at Resolute Support Mission Headquarters) for the purposes of command reconnaissance, rotation, and extraction of forces from theatre.
10. **Note** that the Chief of Defence Force will inform the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defence and the Minister of Foreign Affairs in advance whenever Cabinet-mandated personnel numbers are exceeded for the reasons set out in recommendation 9.
11. **Note** that if agreed at recommendation 5 above the total estimated cost of Option 1 to be funded from Crown Revenue from 1 July 2019 to 30 September 2019 is assessed as \$0.066M.
12. **Note** that if agreed at recommendation 5 above the total estimated cost of Option 2 to be funded from Crown Revenue from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 is assessed as \$1.536M.
13. **Note** that if agreed at recommendation 5 above the total estimated cost of Option 3 to be funded from Crown Revenue from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 is assessed as \$1.960M.
14. **Note** that if agreed at recommendation 5 above the total estimated cost of Option 4 to be funded from Crown Revenue from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 is assessed as \$1.459M.
15. **Note** that estimated costs in 2019/20 for the agreed option at recommendation 5 above can be met from 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: THE EVOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT AND NEW ZEALAND'S RESPONSE SINCE 2001

1. Afghanistan has a long history of conflict. Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, the US launched a counter-terrorism operation against Al-Qaeda and its Taliban hosts, to dismantle Al-Qaeda and deny it a safe haven in Afghanistan, and to remove the Taliban from power. The Taliban abandoned Kabul in November 2001, and most members of Al-Qaeda who were not killed or captured in the initial months of the conflict fled to safe havens in Pakistan. New Zealand's involvement began shortly after the onset of the conflict, initially through the NZDF Special Air Service (SAS), and we have continued to support the international, NATO-led coalition in Afghanistan as it has evolved into a stabilisation, reconstruction, and training mission.

2. By 2003, the international mission had evolved into a state-building effort to assist Afghanistan in meeting immense security and development challenges. The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which was originally mandated to provide security in Kabul, was extended to take primary security responsibility for all of Afghanistan, and to train and develop Afghanistan's own defence and security forces. NATO's involvement in Afghanistan has developed into a coalition of over forty nations, while NATO's operations in Afghanistan have been mandated by UN Security Council Resolutions since December 2001.

3. As the international community's response in Afghanistan evolved, so too did the nature of the New Zealand commitment. In August 2003, a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) of up to 140 personnel was deployed and tasked with ensuring stability in Bamyan Province. Through to its withdrawal in April 2013, the PRT provided security in the province, and supported civilian reconstruction efforts led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade with New Zealand Police (under an EUPOL initiative), delivering over 200 development initiatives. The combined value of these initiatives was more than NZ\$100 million and included work across areas such as education, health, governance, security, agriculture and power supply.

4. Concurrently, New Zealand supported the ongoing US-led counter-terrorism operations during this period, including through two additional six month deployments of the SAS in 2004 and 2005/6. From 2009 to 2012, the SAS was deployed to Kabul in Operation Wātea, where they were tasked with disrupting and defeating insurgent threats and mentoring the Afghanistan Crisis Response Unit, including during

### The ANAOA

The Afghanistan National Army Officer Academy (ANAOA) is an important part of the RSM train, advise, assist mission in Afghanistan. It focusses on delivering training and mentoring to the Afghan Army to train future Afghan military leaders, and develop the skills that will enable Afghanistan to take responsibility for its own defence. Recruits are also trained leadership values, human rights, and the law of armed conflict. As of April 2019, 4,293 Afghan Army Officer Cadets have been trained through this effort. In an important step in the development of the Afghanistan Security Forces, 242 of these graduates are female. While the numbers seem small, the 242 graduates demonstrate a significant shift in female representation in the Afghan National Army. Previously, the development of military forces in Afghanistan had been undertaken at a regional and even local level. To bring military officers from each of Afghanistan ethnic groups and regions together to be trained in one institution, as part of one national force, has been a significant shift for the country.

The training and mentoring contribution of contributing nations at the ANAOA has enabled its progression from an instructional model to a train-the-trainer model, with Afghan Army instructors now acting as lead instructors in their own right, supported by the mentorship of international personnel. This advancement is best demonstrated by reduced requirement for international personnel at the ANAOA. In consequence, the UK has organised a restructure at the Academy which decreases the number of positions for international personnel. As of fourth quarter 2019, the NZDF contribution at the ANAOA will decrease from 11 to six personnel.

The ANAOA is a well-scoped, self-contained and largely secure mission which generates good outcomes.

s6(a)

operations. The Crisis Response Unit remains one of the Afghan military's highest performing and most frequently utilised assets.

5. From 2013, responsibility for security in Afghanistan transitioned from international forces to the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (hereafter: 'Afghan forces'), including in Bamyán where the New Zealand-led PRT was among the first tranche of provinces handed to Afghan-led security. The Afghan forces remained dependent on ISAF for training and other security support such as strategic airlift.

6. ISAF formally concluded on 28 December 2014, and was replaced by the non-combat Resolute Support Mission (RSM) on 1 January 2015 to provide training, advise and assistance (TAA) for the Afghan security forces and related institutions. Following the transition and launch of the RSM, international military contributions including New Zealand's have been made through this mission. (The only exception is the US which contributes to the RSM and also maintains a combat counter-terrorism mission in Afghanistan in partnership with the Afghan forces). It was in the context of TAA that New Zealand deployed eight NZDF personnel to support training at the UK-led Afghanistan National Army Officer Academy (ANAOA) from September 2013. This number increased to 11 by August 2017 as a result of UK requests for the NZDF to fill specific training roles.

7. Additionally, in 2017, two personnel were deployed to the RSM Headquarters in Kabul.<sup>1</sup> The two RSM Headquarters roles support the broader NATO mission in Afghanistan; one oversees operational planning related to future TAA activities, and the second is a subject matter expert on training who advises the Head of the RSM Advisor Team. Headquarters roles are valuable for New Zealand as they give us important situational awareness of the wider mission and visible leadership positions.

8. In addition, New Zealand has contributed US\$2M annually since 2015 to the UN Development Fund-managed Law and Order Trust Fund (LOFTA) for Afghanistan, which ensures that Afghanistan's Ministry of the Interior has the capability to manage an auditable and efficient payroll system for the provision of timely salary payments to Afghan National Police and Central Prisons Department personnel.

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<sup>1</sup> New Zealand's initial 2013 contribution of eight personnel to the ANAOA grew to 10 personnel in 2016. In August 2017, Cabinet then increased the ANAOA contribution to 11 personnel, and to deploy two personnel to the RSM Headquarters to 30 June 2019 [CAB-17-MIN-0437].



## ANNEX B: DETAIL OF OPTIONS AND MILITARY ROLES

Each of the four options considered in the Afghanistan Strategic Reassessment involve a decrease in the numbers of deployed personnel from the current deployment of 13. The table below outlines the different contributions that will be made under each of the four options.

	ANAOA to Sep 19	ANAOA post Sep 19	ANAOA post Dec 19	ANAOA post Mar 20	RSM Headquarters	WPS roles	Total (Mar 20)
Option 1	11	8	0	0	2 (0 post Sep 19)	0	0
Option 2	11	8	6	6	2	0	8
Option 3	11	8	6	6	2	up to 3	11
Option 4	11	8	5 <sup>1</sup>	0	2	up to 3	5

The six roles at the ANAOA that NZDF would fill post December 2019, if directed by Government, include:

- ANAOA Chief Instructor, who acts as the principal training co-ordinator and is responsible for advising the ANAOA Deputy Commandant on all training requirements and delivery of operational planning;
- Staff Officer 2 Assurance, who is responsible for co-coordinating and advising on all training assessment functions within ANAOA itself and the wider ANAOA mission;
- Training Warrant Officer, who is responsible for mentoring training staff at ANAOA, with particular focus on training design and delivery, and the assessment of ANAOA instructors and students; and
- three Real Life Support personnel, who contribute to the effectiveness of both the NZDF contingent and ANAOA, in the roles of s6(a) operations management and logistics support as part of the UK Force Protection Company.

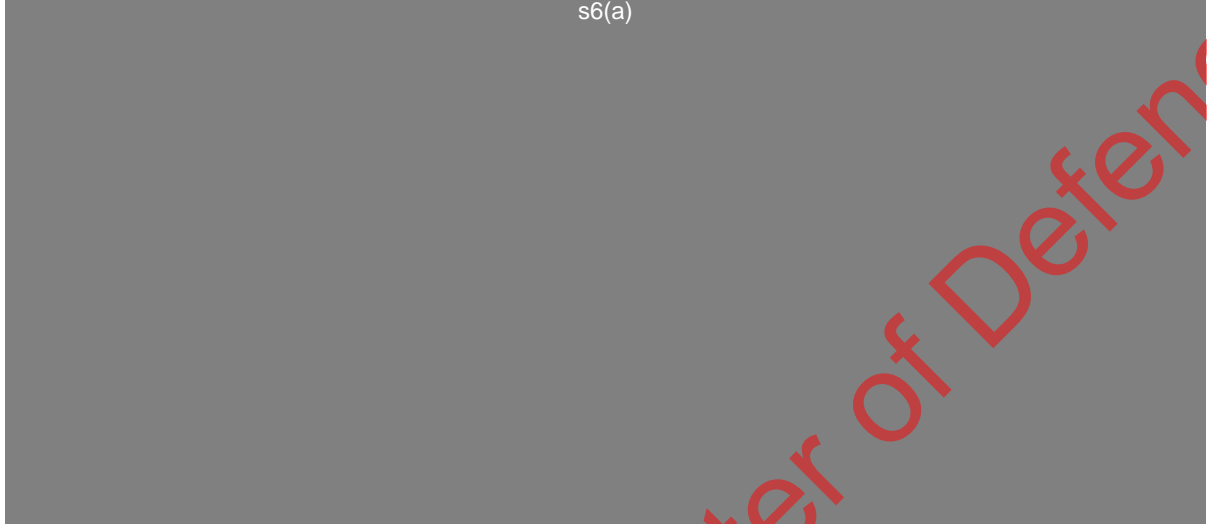
The two roles in the RSM Headquarters that NZDF would fill, if directed by Government, include:

- senior officer who oversees operational planning related to future train, advise, assist activities in the RSM more broadly, and a

<sup>1</sup> Option 4 proposes withdrawal from the ANAOA in line with personnel rotation cycles. According to these rotation cycles, one person would reach the end of their rotation in November 2019, with the remaining 5 reaching the end of their rotations no later than March 2019.

- senior warrant officer who is a subject matter expert on training and who advises the Head of the RSM Advisor Team.

The three roles supporting Women, Peace and Security efforts in Afghanistan that NZDF would fill, if directed by Government and successful in the NATO bidding process, include:



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<sup>2</sup> Note, NATO maintains a range of similar positions across its combatant commands.