

HON RON MARK, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Multinational Force and Observers: Extension of Deployment to 30 September 2018 – Cabinet Documents

April 2019

This publication provides the documents supporting Cabinet's July 2018 decision to a two-month extension (until 30 September 2018) for the New Zealand Defence Force's contribution of up to 28 personnel to the Multinational Force and Observers mission. This allowed a longer-term decisions on the mandate to be considered as part of Cabinet's wider review of deployments in September 2018.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- July 2018 Cabinet minute entitled *Multinational Force and Observers: Extension of Deployment to 30 September 2018* [CAB-18-MIN-0345]
- Cabinet paper entitled *Extension of Multinational Force and Observers Deployment to 30 September 2018* [CAB-18-SUB-0345]

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)]
- the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on the basis of confidence by the Government of any other country [section 6(b)(i)].



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.

Multinational Force and Observers: Extension of Deployment to 30 September 2018

Portfolios Foreign Affairs / Defence

On 23 July 2018, Cabinet:

Proposed mandate extension

- 1 **noted** that the current mandate for the New Zealand deployment to the Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai Peninsula is due to expire on 31 July 2018;
- 2 **noted** the intention to review the five deployment mandates in the Middle East due for expiry in 2018 as a single package in September 2018;
- 3 **agreed** to a two-month extension (until 30 September 2018) of the New Zealand Defence Force contribution to the Multinational Force and Observers mission, to allow for the mandate to be considered as part of Cabinet's wider review of deployments;
- 4 **noted** that no replacement or rotation (Relief in Place) of deployed personnel is planned or anticipated under current operational conditions during the two-month extension period;
- 5 **noted** that in the event Cabinet decides not to extend the mandate, New Zealand is required to provide a minimum of six months' notice under the terms of the agreement with the Multinational Force and Observers;
- 6 **noted** that the overall unmitigated operational threat level for New Zealand Defence Force personnel deployed to the Multinational Force and Observers s6(a)

Financial implications

- 7 **noted** that the total estimated cost of the deployment for two months to 30 September 2018 is assessed as \$0.522 million;
- 8 **noted** that there is a shortfall of \$0.522 million in Vote Defence Force in 2018/19 that is not able to be met within existing baselines;

- 9 **approved** the following changes to appropriations to give effect to the policy decision in paragraph 3 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					
Departmental Output Expense: Military Operations in Support of a Rules-Based International Order (funded by revenue Crown)	-	0.522	-	-	-

- 10 **agreed** that the additional expenses required in 2018/19 under paragraph 9 above be a charge against the tagged Operating contingency established as part of Budget 2017 for Military Operations in Support of a Rules-Based International Order.
- 11 **agreed** that the change to appropriations for 2018/19 above be included in the 2018/19 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply.

Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet

Hard-copy distribution:

Prime Minister
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Minister of Defence

Chair,

Cabinet

EXTENSION OF MULTINATIONAL FORCE AND OBSERVERS DEPLOYMENT TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2018

Proposal

1. This paper seeks Cabinet's agreement to a two month extension of the mandate for the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) deployment of 28 personnel to the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) to the Sinai Peninsula, Egypt from 31 July 2018 to 30 September 2018.

Background

2. The MFO remains a peacekeeping mission of contemporary significance, acting as a neutral arbiter in monitoring Egypt and Israel's adherence to the security provisions of the 1979 Peace Treaty (Treaty) – a treaty built on Egypt and Israel's recognition of the need for a foundational peace document and international supervision of its outcomes.

3. The MFO has also played a more immediate role in recent years

s6(a)

s6(b)(i)

4. There are around 1150 international troops deployed in the MFO. Current significant contributors include Canada, Colombia, Fiji, Italy, Uruguay and the United States. The United Kingdom and Australia also contribute to this mission.

New Zealand's contributions

5. New Zealand's contributions to the MFO since the inception of the mission in 1982 have been a key component of our regional peacekeeping footprint. There are currently 28 NZDF personnel deployed, primarily in driving (including driving training), engineering and headquarters roles.

6. Our commitment to the mission is a practical contribution to multilateral solutions to advance peace and stability in the Middle East – a region of strategic importance to New Zealand. For nearly four decades we have operated effectively with a range of partners, sustaining the MFO as a successful, practical example of a multinational

peacekeeping operation in a volatile region. New Zealand's commitment to the MFO is valued highly by both Treaty partners, Israel and Egypt.

7. The mission fulfils the following strategic objectives:

- a. to contribute to peace and stability between Egypt and Israel [REDACTED] s6(a) [REDACTED];
- b. to contribute to the maintenance of the international (and regional) rules-based order;
- c. to support and maintain alignment with key security partners; and
- d. to meet NZDF's ongoing operational need to build capability and force readiness amongst its personnel.

Proposed Mandate Extension

8. On 11 June, Cabinet agreed to extend the mandate of NZDF personnel serving at the Afghan National Army Officer Academy by three months (to 30 September 2018). The Prime Minister noted at the time that this would enable the Government to make a number of related decisions over deployments in the Middle East, and would allow extra time to consider further advice on Afghanistan in light of these deployment decisions. A two month extension to the MFO mandate would bring this into line with that decision point and allow the Government to consider its regional deployment footprint (Afghanistan, Iraq, Sinai - 'MFO', South Sudan – UNMISS, and Golan Heights – 'UNTSO') in September as one package.

9. As the mandate for the MFO deployment expires on 31 July 2018, this paper seeks Cabinet's agreement to extend the MFO deployment mandate by two months (out to 30 September 2018) to ensure alignment with this intention to review the deployments as a package. Note, however, that should the Government elect to withdraw from the MFO mission, New Zealand is obligated to provide a minimum of six months written notice to the MFO Director General.

10. There are no replacement or rotation of deployed personnel (also referred to as a Relief in Place, 'RIP') currently planned for this two-month extension period and no changes to Cabinet-mandated numbers are anticipated under current operational conditions. As a result, this paper does not include the provision that authorises Cabinet-mandated deployment numbers to be exceeded on a temporary basis for the purposes of command reconnaissance, rotation, and extraction of forces in and out of theatre¹. However, Ministers will be asked to agree to this provision when the deployment is re-considered in September.

¹ The previous Government [CAB Min (12) 10/2 refers] agreed that this provision to temporarily exceed Cabinet-mandated deployment numbers for the purposes of command reconnaissance, rotation, and extraction of forces in and out of theatre should be included in every NZDF deployment Cabinet paper. More detail on the personnel rotation provision is provided in the 23 July Cabinet paper entitled Rotation of New Zealand Defence Force Deployed Forces. The Chief of Defence Force will inform the Minister of Defence, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs in advance whenever this occurs.

Operational Risk, including security and force protection arrangements

11. The unmitigated operational threat level for NZDF personnel deployed to the MFO s6(a). In order to mitigate this threat, all NZDF personnel complete a robust pre-deployment training programme. Then, once in theatre, they regularly conduct a range of continuation training to maintain military skill levels. s6(a)

12. The NZDF monitors threat levels and, where appropriate, imposes restrictions on New Zealand personnel. s6(a)

Consultation

13. This paper has been prepared by the Ministry of Defence, the NZDF and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. This paper has also been consulted with The Treasury, and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PAG).

Cost of Deployment

14. The estimated cost of the deployment for two months to 30 September 2018 is \$0.522 million. New Zealand will fully fund the deployment and will not seek reimbursement from the Mission Director General.

15. There is a shortfall in funding available from current appropriations of \$0.522M because funding for Vote Defence Force: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests is fully committed for 2018/19 as a result of existing mandated missions². The additional funding required of \$0.522M 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.

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

Vote Defence Force	NZ \$million				
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Total
Estimated cost of proposed deployment	0.522	-	-	-	0.522
Total funded from existing appropriation: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests	-	-	-	-	-
Additional Funding Required	0.522	-	-	-	0.522

² The mandated missions include Building Partner Capability in Iraq, Maritime Security and Support Operations in the wider Middle East region, the United Nations Missions in South Sudan, South Korea, Golan Heights and Mali.

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17. 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				Total
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	
Balance of tagged Operating contingency	2.420	20.000	20.000	0.000	42.420
Previously approved deployments	(3.410)	(6.410)	0.000	0.000	(9.820)
Funding for this deployment	0.000	(0.522)	0.000	0.000	(0.522)
Remaining tagged operating contingency balance	(0.990)	13.068	20.000	0.000	32.078
Deployment approved in principle	-	(1.804)	-	-	(1.804)
Remaining tagged operating contingency after approved in principle deployment	(0.990)	11.264	20.000	0.000	30.274

Legislative Implications

18. There are no legislative implications for extending the mandate for New Zealand's commitment to the MFO.

Recommendations

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

- a) **note** that the current mandate for the New Zealand deployment to the Multinational Force and Observers is due to expire on 31 July 2018;
- b) **note** the intention to review the five deployment mandates due for expiry in 2018 as a single package in September;
- c) **agree** to a two month extension (until 30 September 2018) of the New Zealand Defence Force contribution to the Multinational Force and Observers mission to allow for the mandate to be considered as part of Cabinet's wider review of deployments;
- d) **note** that no replacement or rotation (Relief in Place) of deployed personnel is planned or anticipated under current operational conditions during the two-month extension period;
- e) **note** that in the event that Cabinet decides not to extend the mandate, New Zealand is required to provide a minimum of six months' notice under the terms of our agreement with the Multinational Force and Observers;
- f) **note** that the overall unmitigated operational threat level for New Zealand Defence Force personnel deployed to the Multinational Force and Observers

s6(a)

- g) **note** that the total estimated cost of the approved deployment for two months to 30 September 2018 is assessed as \$0.522M;
- h) **note** that there is a shortfall of \$0.522M in 2018/19 that is not able to be met within existing baselines;
- i) **approve** the following changes to appropriations to give effect to the policy decision in recommendation [c] 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					
Departmental Output Expense:					
Military Operations in Support of a Rules-Based International Order (funded by revenue Crown)	-	0.522	-	-	-

- j) **agree** that the additional expenses required in 2018/19 under recommendation [h] 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;
- k) **agree** that the proposed change to appropriations for 2018/19 above be included in the 2018/19 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply.

Authorised for lodgement:

Rt Hon Winston Peters
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Ron Mark
MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Annex A: Map of the Multinational Force and Observers

