

## HON RON MARK, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

### Ministerial Overseas Travel 27-11-2017 to 21-01-2019: Hon Ron Mark – Release of Cabinet Documents

June 2019

This publication provides copies of seven reports to Cabinet by Hon Ron Mark on his overseas travel in the period 27 November 2017 to 1 February 2019.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- *Travel Report: Hon Ron Mark; Antarctica 27 November – 1 December 2017* [CAB-18-SUB-0095] and the associated Cabinet minute [CAB-18-MIN-0095]
- *Travel Report: Hon Ron Mark; Middle East and Europe 6 – 18 February 2018* [CAB-18-SUB-0092] and the associated Cabinet minute [CAB-18-MIN-0092]
- *Travel Report: Hon Ron Mark; Papua New Guinea 6 – 9 March 2018* [CAB-18-SUB-0096] and the associated Cabinet minute [CAB-18-MIN-0096]
- *Travel Report: Hon Ron Mark Fiji 22-24 March 2018* [CAB-18-SUB-0196] and the associated Cabinet minute [CAB-18-MIN-0196]
- *Travel Report: Hon Ron Mark; Shangri-La Dialogue, Singapore, 1 – 3 June* [CAB-18-SUB-0355] and the associated Cabinet minute [CAB-18-MIN-0355]
- *Travel Report: Hon Ron Mark; Singapore and Sydney 18-22 October* [CAB-18-SUB-0639] and the associated Cabinet minute [CAB-18-MIN-0639]
- *Travel Report: Hon Ron Mark; Middle East and Africa 21 Jan – 1 Feb 2019* [CAB-19-SUB-0083] and the associated Cabinet minute [CAB-19-MIN-0083]

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

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- 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)].



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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### Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark

**Portfolio**      **Defence**

On 19 March 2018, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Ron Mark under CAB-18-SUB-0095 on his travel, from 27 November to 1 December 2017, to Antarctica at the invitation of the Chief Executive of Antarctica New Zealand to observe the work the New Zealand Defence Force does to support New Zealand's strategic interests in Antarctica.

Michael Webster  
Secretary of the Cabinet

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**Hard-copy distribution:**

Prime Minister  
Deputy Prime Minister  
Hon Ron Mark

Chair, Cabinet

**TRAVEL REPORT:  
HON RON MARK; ANTARCTICA 27 NOVEMBER – 1 DECEMBER 2017**

**Executive Summary**

1. From 27 November to 1 December I travelled to Antarctica at the invitation of the Chief Executive of Antarctica New Zealand. The visit was an opportunity to observe first-hand the work the New Zealand Defence Force does to support New Zealand's strategic interests in Antarctica. I also took the opportunity to engage with the head of the National Science Foundation at McMurdo Station, with Defence Force personnel from the United States and to meet with New Zealand scientists at Scott Base.

**Background**

2. Defence's key role in relation to Antarctica is to support New Zealand's science programme and civilian presence in the Ross Dependency. The NZDF also contributes key assets to the Joint Logistics Pool Antarctica New Zealand operates with the United States and Italian Antarctic programmes. Logistic support is also shared with South Korea on an as required basis.

**Meeting with New Zealand Defence Force Personnel**

3. Throughout my visit I was accompanied by the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) Senior National Officer who manages the NZDF presence in Antarctica over the summer months. I had the opportunity to meet with Royal New Zealand Air Force C-130 crews and logistics support personnel. The NZDF contributes significantly to the Joint Logistics Pool through the deployment of: C-130s and the B757, support teams based at Harewood Terminal in Christchurch and at Scott Base who provide fuel line monitoring, ship offload and driver support. The NZDF also contributes engineers to assist with construction, de-construction and general maintenance at Scott Base as well as tasking for McMurdo. Operations in Antarctica currently form the NZDF's largest mission, with up to 220 operational personnel committed to supporting Antarctic operations over the summer months.

4. The NZDF's support to Antarctica is not without its challenges. As an example, the unpredictability caused by the weather means the C-130 is loaded to complete capacity at take-off. These considerations will need to be built into future government decisions around defence capability.

5. The robust training NZDF personnel receive throughout their careers make them ideal candidates for the wide range of tasks required to support and maintain New Zealand's basing in Antarctica. A number of New Zealand personnel in Antarctica reiterated to me their appreciation for the support they receive from the NZDF.

## **Engagement with the National Science Foundation**

6. I was hosted early in my visit by the United States Antarctic Program and met with the Senior National Representative Margaret Knuth. This engagement provided an insight into the work being undertaken by the National Science Foundation as well as their engagement and partnership with the New Zealand Science Programme. The discussion underlined the significance that New Zealand's contributions to Joint Logistics Pool play in supporting the United States Antarctic Program.

### **Relationship with the United States**

7. It was pleasing to see the depth of collaboration and resource sharing between New Zealand and the United States. A key example of this was the sharing of power generated by the New Zealand built wind turbines with McMurdo Station. This collaboration and mutual support will also be enhanced when the NZDF's Replenishment Vessel *Aotearoa* comes online.

### **Williams Field visit**

8. Noting New Zealand's commitment to military flights to Antarctica and to the Joint Logistics Pool more broadly, I took the opportunity to visit the United States Antarctic Program airfield – Williams Field. Here I met with the United States personnel responsible for maintaining and operating the US LC-130 ski enabled Hercules. I also met with a NZDF officer deployed to support logistics and maintenance at Williams Field. This visit further demonstrated the value that New Zealand provides not only through our support at Harewood terminal, but also through our Defence Force people. I was impressed to see the close collaboration between United States and New Zealand Defence Force personnel play out on 'the ice' where they were repairing United States' aircraft under incredibly challenging conditions.

### **Science and environment overview**

9. As part of the visit, I was given the opportunity to visit the McMurdo dry valleys and hear about the insight this unique environment provides into microclimate zone research. While I was not able to observe firsthand the science being conducted by New Zealanders, I did spend time with Antarctica New Zealand's Acting Chief Science Adviser, Fiona Shanhun and other visiting scientists. I received a briefing on the work being funded by the Deep South National Science Challenge to map snow and sea ice thickness. This work is increasing our understanding of the influence of ice shelves on sea ice formation and persistence.

10. While I was immensely impressed by the research and science being conducted by New Zealand scientists, I was surprised by some of the basic logistical and technological challenges they face. For example, there is very limited access to broadband or Wi-Fi – making communication and access to information difficult. The cramped living conditions on Scott Base also pose challenges. I understand that there is work underway to ameliorate these issues which I am supportive of and

which I would agree to being addressed with some priority – especially the communication and connectivity issues.

### **Antarctica Culture and Heritage**

11. Through the course of my visit I was extremely privileged to visit Discovery Hut, Shackleton's Hut at Cape Royds and Edmund Hillary's hut at Scott Base. All huts have been immaculately restored by dedicated and passionate New Zealanders and the Antarctic Heritage Trust. I would like to highlight in particular the work by Al Fastier and Lizzie Meek from the Antarctic Heritage Trust who have provided such an outstanding level of expertise, passion and dedication to make each project a huge success.

### **Antarctica – an increasingly contested space**

12. My visit left me in no doubt about the need to prioritise and invest in maintaining our strategic interests in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean. These are ultimately ensuring peace and stability on our southern flank, and maintaining New Zealand's territorial claim to the Ross Dependency. In addition to these wider strategic interests, New Zealand also has important environmental, scientific, conservation, reputational and economic interests to protect.

13. I can see over the next ten to fifteen years that we will face increased competition for influence and higher demand for access to Antarctica. This will see New Zealand need to continue advocating for the protection of the Antarctic environment and its resources, and maintaining capabilities that enable us to support our civilian presence on the ice, as well as that of our partners and to patrol protected areas in the Southern Ocean.

### **Summary**

14. My time in Antarctica provided good insight into the important security, economic, environmental, scientific and diplomatic interests New Zealand has in Antarctica, and the issues that these interests will face over the coming decades. I was particularly struck by the enormous amount of effort and resources dedicated to New Zealand's Antarctica Programme and by the NZDF. This includes not only physical assets (C-130s and the B757s) but also a large number of personnel deployed over the summer months to carry out key tasks to support the New Zealand and United States bases. The NZDF support also extends to protecting New Zealand's strategic interests in the Southern Ocean, where we regularly deploy Offshore Patrol Vessels. This support to New Zealand's Antarctic Programme will continue to be a crucial enabler in underwriting our interests as well as maintaining the support of our key partners – particularly the United States. The visit also highlighted the value of and need to invest in upgrading New Zealand's infrastructure at Scott Base.

## Recommendations

15. I recommend that Cabinet:

**Note** this report.

**Hon Ron Mark**  
Minister of Defence

Released under the Official Information Act 1982



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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### Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark

**Portfolio**      **Defence**

On 19 March 2018, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Ron Mark under CAB-18-SUB-0092 on his travel, from 6 to 18 February 2018 to:

- 1      the Middle East, to visit a number of New Zealand Defence Force operations;
- 2      Rome, Italy to attend the Defeat ISIS Coalition Defence Ministers' Meeting;
- 3      Brussels, Belgium to attend the inaugural Five Eyes Defence Ministers' Meeting and World War One commemorative events.

Michael Webster  
Secretary of the Cabinet

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**Hard-copy distribution:**

Prime Minister  
Deputy Prime Minister  
Hon Ron Mark

Chair, Cabinet

**TRAVEL REPORT:**

**HON RON MARK; MIDDLE EAST AND EUROPE 6 – 18 FEBRUARY 2018**

**Executive Summary**

1. From 6 – 18 February 2018 I travelled to the Middle East (Iraq, Afghanistan and the United Arab Emirates) and Europe (Rome, Brussels, Flanders) for a series of deployment visits, bilateral engagements, multilateral security meetings and commemorative events. As part of my delegation, I was accompanied in the Middle East by Hon Andrew Little and Simon O'Connor MP. [REDACTED] s9(2)(a)

[REDACTED] This was a deliberately designed delegation, one that I hope can be reflected in future major defence visits, as I seek to increase the levels of cross-party understanding of defence and security issues.

**Iraq**

2. While in Iraq, I first called on the Iraqi Minister of Defence Irfan al-Hayali, and Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi. Interactions with both leaders were warm and open, [REDACTED] s9(2)(g)(i)

[REDACTED] The Iraqi leaders were clear that the New Zealand Building Partner Capacity (BPC) training mission was valued, and was welcome into the future. [REDACTED] s6(a)

3. Training assistance for security forces remains a priority, with the focus moving away from the Army and onto the Federal Police, for both holding ground and constabulary activities. While ISIS has lost its territorial foothold, it will continue as an insurgency within Iraq. [REDACTED] s6(b)(i)

[REDACTED]

4. [REDACTED] s6(a)



s6(a)

In all meetings, the New Zealand delegation, and in particular Hon Andrew Little in his capacity as Minister of Justice stressed the importance of adherence to human rights, and the emphasis New Zealand places on training soldiers in the rules of engagement and law of armed conflict.

5. The delegation visited Taji Military Camp, and the joint New Zealand-Australian Building Partner Capacity mission, as well as visiting New Zealand personnel based in Headquarters elements in Baghdad. I also visited the Iraqi Security Forces' Baghdad Fighting School at Camp Taji, where the Commanding Officer noted how professional, open and humble our soldiers are. As we would expect, the training work that our personnel are doing at Taji was impressive, highly professional, and conducted in a welcoming spirit. In particular, I noted the comparative ease with which our personnel worked with the Iraqi trainees, which indicated the establishment of a very high level of trust and respect between Kiwi and Iraqi troops on a people to people basis. The levels of interoperability, jointness and camaraderie between New Zealand and Australian personnel was clear, from the leadership down. It was highly valuable for our delegation to view their work first hand.

6. The focus of the Iraqi Government following the end of the conventional war against ISIS in Iraq is now clearly on stabilisation and winning the confidence of the population. The reconstruction task ahead for Iraq is massive, estimated by the Iraqis as requiring up to \$100 billion USD in foreign assistance. s9(2)(f)(iv)

## Afghanistan

7. Unfortunately bad weather in Kabul meant the delegation was unable to move from the military base at Kabul International Airport to the Green Zone. This meant all calls on the Government of Afghanistan (President Ashraf Ghani, Minister of Defence Major General Tariq Shah Bahrami and Minister of Interior Wais Barmak) were cancelled. We were, however, able to hold a VTC with Lieutenant General Johann Langenegger, Chief of Staff for the Resolute Support mission (and third in command of the NATO military mission in Afghanistan) and Ambassador Cornelius Zimmerman, the Special Civilian Representative for NATO in Afghanistan.

8. Security in Afghanistan is a complex picture. s6(a)

9. s6(a)

s6(b)(ii)

10.

s6(a)

11. Afghanistan and NATO highly values our training contribution at the Afghan National Army Officer Academy and in Resolute Support Headquarters in Kabul. NATO also sought a New Zealand civilian diplomatic posting to Resolute Support Headquarters. Afghan National Army Officer Academy training is making a real difference to the junior officers through the course, s6(a)

#### United Arab Emirates

12.

s6(a)

13. In Abu Dhabi, I called on Minister of State for Defence Affairs Mohammed Ahmed al-Bowardi. A very warm meeting, s6(a)  
Minister al-Bowardi proposed a more complete Memorandum of Agreement on Defence Cooperation, which officials are currently considering, s6(b)(i)

s6(b)(i)

#### Meeting with Director General, Multi-National Force and Observers, Rome

14. My first meeting in Rome was with Ambassador Stephen Beecroft, Director General, Multi-National Force and Observers, a United States-led peacekeeping force based in the Sinai Peninsula, enforcing the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. This was an important personal moment for me - as a young officer, I was involved in the establishment of the MFO mission, on its very first deployment, in 1982.

15. The mission remains highly desired by Egypt and Israel, and is valuable as symbol for the overall Middle East Peace Process. [REDACTED] s6(a)

**Defeat-ISIS Coalition Defence Ministers [REDACTED] s6(a) Meeting, Rome**

16. The meeting of the thirteen troop contributing Coalition Defence Ministers was focussed on reviewing progress in the campaign against ISIS in Iraq and Syria, and was co-chaired by Italy's Defence Minister Roberta Pinotti and US Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis. [REDACTED] s6(a)

[REDACTED] s6(b)(i)

17. [REDACTED] s6(a)

18. [REDACTED] s9(2)(g)(i)

**Five Eyes Defence Ministers Meeting, Brussels**

19. A first meeting of Defence Ministers from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States was hosted at the UK Mission to NATO in Brussels on 14 February (timed back to back with the 14-15 February NATO

Defence Ministers meeting). Discussion focused [redacted] s6(a) [redacted] Ministers agreed to the value of this exchange, committing to meet together regularly.

### **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, Brussels**

20. Meetings at NATO headquarters were characterised by warm engagement with strongly positive commentary on New Zealand's security contributions, both currently through NATO and historically in Europe. New Zealand is viewed as a steadfast and reliable partner by NATO and in addition to work under way to implement our refreshed Individual Partnership and Cooperation programme some potential new areas of collaboration were discussed (most notable around women, peace and security consistent with UN resolution 1325).

21. Insights were offered into developments in Afghanistan/Iraq and my impressions from the visits, and of the broader Asia-Pacific security environment.

s9(2)(g)(i)

22.

s6(a), s6(b)(ii)

### **Meeting with the Belgian Minister of Defence, Brussels**

23. In a meeting at NATO Headquarters, I had an excellent conversation with my Belgian counterpart, Steven Vandepuut. Minister Vandepuut thanked New Zealand for its sacrifice one hundred years ago and noted that our centennial commemorations of 2017 highlighted both the dangers of war and acted as a message of peace. We exchanged views on a number of current operational questions, including defence force restructuring (we have similar sized Defence Forces, with similar challenges), the deployment of forces to Africa in support of NATO, the EU, and UN missions.

### **Commemorative Events, Flanders**

24. In between my engagements in Brussels, I visited Flanders to experience key World War 1 battlefields and pay respects to fallen New Zealand soldiers. I followed the path of New Zealand soldiers through Belgium, from their initial location in Commines Warneton at the beginning of 1917, through to the Battle of Messines in June 1917, the First Battle of Passchendaele (and New Zealand's darkest day) in October 1917, and finishing at Polygon Wood, where the New Zealanders spent to winter of 1917-18 before returning to France. I met with a number of New Zealand's

key supporters in the communities, including Sandy Evrard, the Mayor of Messines. I also participated in a Last Post Association, Menin Gate service in the evening and attended a dinner for the Honorary Members of the New Zealand Order of Merit.

25. The day culminated with a short but poignant Wreath Laying Ceremony at Polygon Wood where I spoke of the Division's wintering over in that area in 1917/1918, and on that day, to remember Corporal Percy Jory of the 1<sup>st</sup> Otago Battalion, who was the only Kiwi killed in action on 14 February 1918. This was a very moving service, held at sunset, and included the participation of around 20 flag bearers from local communities and patriotic associations. The local, regional and Federal government were also represented, providing me with a good sense of extent of support for New Zealand across the complex community relationships in Belgium

### Summary

26. The Middle East programme was an excellent cross-party opportunity to attain insights into the security situations in Iraq and Afghanistan in advance of Cabinet consideration of the relevant deployment mandate decisions, to assess the effectiveness of our Defence contributions in the Middle East, and to hear first-hand the perspectives of the Governments of Iraq, Afghanistan and the United Arab Emirates, and our military partners in the region. It was also an opportunity to emphasise the new coalition Government's commitment to the rules based international order, human rights, peace and prosperity for all. It also gave a valuable opportunity to introduce myself as Minister, and to assess their responses to key issues.

27. The Defeat ISIS Coalition s6(a) Defence Ministers meeting in Rome, chaired by the United States and Italy, s6(a)

I am deeply grateful to have had the opportunity to visit the battlefields of Flanders, Belgium, to pay my respects to the fallen New Zealand heroes of World War One, on behalf of this Government, the people of New Zealand, and the our veterans community.

### Recommendations

30. I recommend that Cabinet:

**Note** this report.

**Hon Ron Mark**

Minister of Defence

15 March 2018

Released under the Official Information Act 1982



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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### Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark

**Portfolio**      **Defence**

On 19 March 2018, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Ron Mark under CAB-18-SUB-0096 on his travel, from 6 to 9 March 2018, to Papua New Guinea to meet with his counterpart and sign the Status of Forces Agreement between New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.

Michael Webster  
Secretary of the Cabinet

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**Hard-copy distribution:**

Prime Minister  
Deputy Prime Minister  
Hon Ron Mark

Chair, Cabinet

**TRAVEL REPORT:**

**HON RON MARK; PAPUA NEW GUINEA 6 – 9 MARCH 2018**

**Executive Summary**

1. From 6 – 9 March 2018 I travelled to Papua New Guinea (Port Moresby) to meet with my counterpart and to sign the Status of Forces Agreement between New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. I met with key Ministers involved in APEC 2018 preparation and planning and saw first-hand the infrastructure that is being developed to host this event. I took the opportunity to spend time with New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) and New Zealand Police personnel who are providing training and capacity building to the Papua New Guinea Defence Force and the Royal Constabulary respectively. I also met with the Royal New Zealand and Royal Australian Air Force C-130 crews supporting the earthquake response.

**Bilateral Defence Relationship**

2. My visit was the first by a New Zealand Defence Minister since 2015 and was an inaugural visit by a Minister from this Coalition Government. All of my meetings were warm and frank, with the majority of Ministers providing me with honest accounts of the challenges they are facing, of which funding is a major factor.

3. My meetings left me in no doubt of the positive state of the New Zealand-Papua New Guinea bilateral defence relationship. Engagement between our two defence forces includes visits, exercising together, leadership development, capacity building and training, and humanitarian assistance and disaster response. During my meeting with the Minister of Defence I reinforced New Zealand's commitment to ongoing defence engagement

s9(2)(g)(i)

4. Following my call with the Minister of Defence, we signed the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). This Agreement is an important step in building future defence engagement and provides a legal framework for our ongoing military cooperation. It is a standard way of setting out the legal conditions and practical arrangements for joint military activities involving our two countries, including for operating in each other's territories. Such an agreement sets out the responsibilities and obligations of both sides including jurisdiction over criminal and disciplinary matters. Having this



Agreement in place is highly valuable, especially ahead of the security and defence support New Zealand will be providing to Papua New Guinea throughout its APEC hosting and particularly during the Leaders' meetings.

### Earthquake response

5. Following the 7.5 Magnitude earthquake on 26 February, the NZDF deployed medical planning personnel and a Royal New Zealand Navy C-130 and crew to distribute aid stores to the impacted Southern Highlands/Hela area. New Zealand also provided immediate relief funding. All of our support was gratefully received. The timing of my visit meant I was able to register in person New Zealand's condolences and to emphasise our willingness to provide additional support (i.e. P3 Orion aerial surveillance) to support the response. I delivered these messages to all Ministers I met with, including a brief informal meeting with Prime Minister O'Neil.

6. [REDACTED] s6(a)

### APEC

7. On APEC, I had some useful discussions with the Minister for APEC Justin Tkatchenko, and the Minister for Police Jelta Wong around preparations and planning for PNG's hosting year, with a focus on the delivery of a successful Leaders Summit in November. [REDACTED] s6(b)(i)

8. I had a brief tour around Port Moresby where the New Zealand High Commissioner Sue Mackwell pointed out the key infrastructure development for APEC Summit. While a large percentage of the infrastructure was still under-development, there is confidence that the majority of it will be complete to support the Leaders' meetings in November.

9. [REDACTED] s6(a)

[REDACTED] The NZDF and the New Zealand Police are providing much needed security and defence capacity building support to both the Papua New Guinea Defence Force and the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary. This includes the deployment of NZDF maritime and air assets for Leaders' Week and the deployment of 12 NZ Police in capacity building and advisory roles in Port Moresby for up to 18 months. [REDACTED] s6(a)

[REDACTED] This support is couched within a wider package of funding and logistics and protocol support.

## Summary

10. My visit provided proof of the depth and breadth of New Zealand's bilateral defence relationship with Papua New Guinea. The signing of the Status of Forces Agreement cements the closeness of the defence relationship and signals a commitment to ongoing engagement. The SOFA will also provide suitable provisions for NZDF personnel providing APEC security support. My visit was also timely given the Foreign Minister's recent announcements to the Lowy Institute on the Pacific refresh strategy – an announcement that resonated with many of the Ministers and officials I met with.

11. Sharing New Zealand's condolences in light of the recent earthquake and reaffirming our commitment to providing any additional support was well received by counterparts and demonstrated the close relationship our two countries share.

s6(a)

New Zealand and Australia's quick response and delivery of aid to areas otherwise difficult to access was, and continues to be, incredibly valuable and welcomed by all the Ministers I met with. There is however much more that needs to be done on the humanitarian front.

12.

s6(a)

## Recommendations

13. I recommend that Cabinet:

**Note** this report.

**Hon Ron Mark**

Minister of Defence

Released under the Official Information Act 1982



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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### Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark

**Portfolio**      **Defence**

On 7 May 2018, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Ron Mark under CAB-18-SUB-0196 on his travel, from 22 to 24 March 2018, to Fiji to represent New Zealand at the unveiling of the Commemorative Monument to No. 5 Squadron of the Royal New Zealand Air Force at the University of the South Pacific.

Michael Webster  
Secretary of the Cabinet

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**Hard-copy distribution:**

Prime Minister  
Deputy Prime Minister  
Hon Ron Mark

Chair, Cabinet

**REPORT ON OVERSEAS TRAVEL: HON RON MARK**

**FIJI 22-24 MARCH 2018**

**Executive Summary**

1. From 22-24 March 2018 I travelled to Fiji to represent New Zealand at the unveiling of the Commemorative Monument to No. 5 Squadron of the Royal New Zealand Air Force at the University of the South Pacific, following their invitation to the Prime Minister. Currently serving NZDF personnel and 25 NZDF Veterans also took part in the commemorative activities. I also met with my counterpart, the Minister of Defence and National Security and the Minister for Fisheries, Hon Semi Koroilavesau.

**Bilateral Defence Relationship**

2. My visit was the first by a New Zealand Minister from this Coalition Government. My overall impression from the visit is that the Defence relationship underpins a deep and longstanding relationship between New Zealand and Fiji. This was particularly noted in the very warm address given at the commemorative unveiling by Prime Minister Bainimarama where he reflected on the very positive relationship, both historically and today.

3. In my initial call on the Minister of Defence and Security, Hon Ratu Inoke Kubuabola, he noted the very good cooperation between both New Zealand and Australia with Fiji, particularly since the cyclone relief support in 2015. He remarked that New Zealand's Orion was the first international military aircraft to land at Nausori airport (Suva) in the response. I thanked the Minister for Fiji's support to the repatriation of two NZDF personnel as part of Te Auraki, and we both noted the significance of the University's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the Commemorative Monument unveiling the next day. He also thanked me for New Zealand's hosting of the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting last year, and looked forward to Fiji hosting the next one.

4.

s6(a)

s6(a)

5.

s6(a)

### **Call on Minister of Fisheries**

6. Hon Semi Koroilavesau noted that the Ministry for Fisheries was only established 14 months ago and was their initial focus had been on the offshore fisheries. He was most appreciative of New Zealand support and remarked on New Zealand's expertise willingness to assist. The deployment of the New Zealand Inshore Patrol Vessel, HMNZS HAWEA, had been very successful and had provided valuable lessons for them about focussing on the coastal environment, and demonstrating methods for conducting enforcement activity efficiently.

s6(b)(i)

### **Commemorative Events**

7. I laid a wreath at Suva Military Cemetery where a number of New Zealand Defence Force personnel are buried, accompanied by the NZDF and Veterans contingents. I was also able to see the graves of the two Air Force personnel who will be brought back to New Zealand as part of Te Auraki (The Return) in May.

8. As part of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the University of the South Pacific (USP) I was privileged to take part in the unveiling, with Prime Minister Bainimarama, the Commemorative Monument to No. 5 Squadron RNZAF and its presence at Laucala Bay in Suva from 1941 to 1967. The speeches delivered by the Vice-Chancellor of USP and the Prime Minister were both very warm in their descriptions of the close relationship between New Zealand and Fiji. It included reference to recent NZDF assistance in the region with the successful P-3K2 Orion search and rescue in Kiribati as an example of our current and ongoing support.

9. The reception hosted by the High Commissioner at the residence was a further opportunity to reinforce the close ties between the two countries. The Prime Minister even took the time to call in unexpectedly at the residence just prior to the reception.

### **Summary**

10. My visit provided a first opportunity for this Coalition Government to commence high level engagement with Fiji, s6(a)

11. I was most appreciative of all the effort undertaken by both NZDF and High Commission staff to make this visit a success.

### **Recommendations**

12. I recommend that Cabinet:

**Note** this report.

**Hon Ron Mark**

Minister of Defence

Released under the Official Information Act 1982



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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### Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark

**Portfolio**      **Defence**

On 30 July 2018, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Ron Mark under CAB-18-SUB-0355 on his travel, from 31 May to 4 June 2018, to Singapore to attend the International Institute for Strategic Studies' Shangri-La Dialogue.

Michael Webster  
Secretary of the Cabinet

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**Hard-copy distribution:**

Prime Minister  
Deputy Prime Minister  
Hon Ron Mark



Chair, Cabinet

**TRAVEL REPORT:**

**HON RON MARK; SHANGRI-LA DIALOGUE, SINGAPORE, 1 – 3 JUNE**

**Proposal**

1. That Cabinet note the report on attendance at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore from 1-3 June.

**Travel report**

2. From 1 - 3 June I travelled to Singapore for the 17th Shangri-La Dialogue. The annual Shangri-La Dialogue is the primary platform for developing and discussing effective public policy on the security challenges facing the Asia-Pacific. This year's Dialogue was the largest, with 40 plus ministers in attendance and representation from 51 nationalities.

3. New Zealand's ongoing presence at this forum is valued and I am pleased to note that New Zealand received several acknowledgments from our partners in their formal plenary speeches. This included Prime Minister Modi who said there was "fresh energy" in the India-New Zealand partnership; and from Secretary Mattis who said the US was revitalising and modernising its defence partnership with New Zealand.

4. Prominent themes discussed at the Dialogue included the Indo-Pacific construct (referred to interchangeably as a grouping, region or strategy), the role of ASEAN-centric organisations, developments in the South China Sea and the security implications of climate change. A number of the themes discussed are reflected in New Zealand's Strategic Defence Policy Statement.

5. I also participated in a panel discussion on Managing Competition in Regional Security Cooperation. My remarks centred on the importance of inclusive and transparent cooperation. This included highlighting New Zealand's Strategic Defence Policy Statement; New Zealand's engagement in ASEAN-centric regional security fora; and 'future trends' including climate change as now present realities the region must address. I proposed a number of principals to help guide effective cooperation, including: adherence to the international rules based order; championing areas of niche expertise; and inclusivity.

### *Bilateral Meetings*

6. During the course of the Dialogue, I took the opportunity to meet with counterparts from Canada, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam and the United Kingdom. I also met with the Deputy Secretary General NATO, the Secretary of the United States Navy, the Chief Executive of Lockheed Martin and the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross. I had brief conversations with US Secretary of Defence James Mattis and with the Executive Directors from Boeing and Airbus.

7. I attended a Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA) Ministers breakfast on 2 June [REDACTED] s6(a), s6(b)(i)

### *Singapore Programme*

8. At the conclusion of the Shangri-La Dialogue, I was hosted at the NZDF Defence Support Unit (DSU) in Sembawang by Commanding Officer [REDACTED] s9(2)(a). I received a brief on the role of DSU and also on the Information Fusion Centre in Singapore, where NZDF has one Liaison Officer. As with previous visits, I was impressed by the level of professionalism and dedication of our deployed Defence Force personnel.

### **Summary**

9. The Shangri-La Dialogue provides a valuable forum for collaboration and discussion on key security issues between regional Defence Ministers. The Dialogue provided me with an opportunity to reinforce the value New Zealand places in cross-region engagement and regional security architecture. The bilateral meetings were also a useful opportunity to share New Zealand's position on regional security issues, and to preview aspects of the Strategic Defence Policy Statement.

### **Recommendations**

10. I recommend that Cabinet:

**Note** this report.

**Hon Ron Mark**

Minister of Defence

Released under the Official Information Act 1982



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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### Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark

**Portfolios**      **Defence / Veterans**

On 17 December 2018, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Ron Mark under CAB-18-SUB-0639 on his travel, from 18 to 22 October 2018, to:

- 1      Singapore, to attend the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus;
- 2      Sydney, Australia, to attend the Five Eyes International Ministerial Conference on Veterans' Issues and the Invictus Games.

Michael Webster  
Secretary of the Cabinet

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**Hard-copy distribution:**

Prime Minister  
Deputy Prime Minister  
Hon Ron Mark

Chair, Cabinet

**TRAVEL REPORT:**

**HON RON MARK; SINGAPORE AND SYDNEY 18-22 OCTOBER**

**Proposal**

1. That Cabinet note the report on attendance at the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus in Singapore and the Five Eyes International Ministerial Conference on Veterans' Issues and the Invictus Games in Sydney over 18 – 22 October.

**Travel report**

*ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus*

2. From 18 – 20 October I travelled to Singapore for the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus). My Singapore programme included: bilateral calls with counterparts; a gala dinner hosted by Singapore's Defence Minister, Dr Ng Eng Hen; the ADMM-Plus ministerial meeting itself and a heads of delegation lunch hosted by Singapore's Acting Prime Minister/Deputy Prime Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security, Mr Teo Chee Hean.

3. The recently annualised ADMM Plus is an important forum for discussing regional security issues with counterparts in the Asia Pacific. Our discussions at the ADMM Plus plenary session focused predominantly on counter-terrorism and confidence building measures. Most countries used their intervention as an opportunity to provide national perspectives on the regional security environment. My own remarks focused on the value of confidence building measures and outlined New Zealand's approach to confidence building in the region (i.e. through developing people to people links, practical engagement and mutual openness). I also took the opportunity to introduce the Strategic Defence Policy Statement and to reiterate the value that this Statement places on ASEAN-centric security forums.

4. Through the course of the plenary session, ASEAN and Plus Ministers agreed to the release of two joint statements. One on Practical Confidence-Building Measures and the other on Strengthening Counter-Terrorism Cooperation, Exploring Collective Application of World's First Multilateral Air Guidelines Across 18 Countries.

5. In the margins of the ADMM Plus, I conducted introductory bilateral calls with a number of counterparts including: Australia, Brunei, China, Republic of Korea and Thailand. During these discussions we traversed the respective bilateral defence relationships and I took the opportunity to brief counterparts on the Strategic

Defence Policy Statement 2018 as well as recent capability decisions (i.e. the replacement of the P-3K2 Orions) where appropriate.

6. s6(a)



7. New Zealand's ongoing presence at the ADMM Plus is valued and I assess that this forum continues to be a useful opportunity for engagement with ASEAN partners.

*Sydney*


8. From Singapore I travelled to Sydney to attend the second day of the Five Eyes International Ministerial Conference on Veterans' Issues, and the second day of the 2018 Invictus Games.

9. This Five Eyes conference is a semi-annual event, and on this occasion Ministers gathered with a special commitment to veterans' mental health and transition from military to civilian life. With reference to mental health, following up the 2017 conference in London, members especially welcomed the 2018 report on suicide prevention from the Five Eyes Research Collaboration. This report confirms progress in our shared understanding of suicide prevention, and demonstrates the similarities that we are facing in responding to this significant public health issue for serving members, veterans and their families.

10. Other subjects brought up during wide-ranging round-table discussions included veterans' ID cards, the nature and level of support for the families of veterans, and various veterans' health research projects in progress or being planned in member nations.

11. The conference concluded with the signing of a Statement of Intent (Sol) recognising the benefits of working together and collaborating on "strategies in areas of common interest that recognise, support and care for the defence and veteran communities and their families". It was of considerable satisfaction to me that New Zealand made a substantial positive contribution to the wording of much of this Sol.

12. After the conference I held bilateral meetings with Helen Helliwell, Head of Service Personnel Support, UK Ministry of Defence, and the Australian Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Hon Darren Chester. The meeting with Ms Helliwell focused on United Kingdom Armed Forces Covenant, for which she is the lead. s9(2)(f)(iv)



s9(2)(f)(iv)

13.

s6(b)(i)

14.

s6(b)(i)

15.

s9(2)(g)(i)

16. On the final day of my travel I had the great pleasure of attending the Invictus Games, held at Sydney Olympic Park. It was wonderful to meet and chat with our athletes and to witness all the events in which Kiwis were competing that day, and others. We can be very proud of all of them – at the Invictus Games the medal tally comes second to the many personal achievements reached against the odds, and the outstanding team environment our men and women and their supporters created in support of each other.

### **Recommendations**

17. I recommend that Cabinet:

**Note** this report.

**Hon Ron Mark**  
Minister of Defence  
Minister for Veterans



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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### Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark

**Portfolio**      **Defence**

On 25 March 2019, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Ron Mark under CAB-19-SUB-0083 on his travel, from 21 January to 1 February 2019 to United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Israel and South Sudan, to visit a number of New Zealand Defence Force deployments and to undertake bilateral meetings.

Michael Webster  
Secretary of the Cabinet

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**Hard-copy distribution:**

Prime Minister  
Deputy Prime Minister  
Hon Ron Mark



Chair, Cabinet

**TRAVEL REPORT:  
HON RON MARK; MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA 21 JAN – 1 FEB 2019**

**Executive Summary**

1. From 21 January – 1 February 2019 I travelled to the Middle East (UAE and Israel) and Africa (Egypt and South Sudan) for a series of deployment visits and bilateral engagements. As part of continued cross-party engagement on defence and security issues, I was accompanied by Hon Tim Macindoe, Deputy Chair of the Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade Committee. This paper covers the key outcomes and issues from our engagements, with more detail provided in the Formal Messages which were released by the Embassies following our visit.

**UAE**

2. During our short stop in Dubai, Minister of State for Defence Affairs Mohammed Ahmed Al Bowardi travelled with a delegation from Abu Dhabi to host a bilateral meeting. As with our engagement last February, we enjoyed a warm and hospitable meeting, with discussion ranging across regional issues

[Redacted text block]

3. [Redacted text block]

## Egypt

4. The first part of our visit to Egypt was a series of bilateral and multilateral engagements in Cairo. Our meeting with the Egyptian Minister of Defence, General Mohamed Zaki, commenced with an expression of appreciation for New Zealand's sustained commitment to the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) since its inception in 1982. The trust and dialogue developed over this time has allowed Egypt and Israel to engage effectively on more recent security risks associated with the emergence of terrorist groups in the Sinai Peninsula.

5. Minister Zaki expressed a desire to broaden the Defence relationship with New Zealand. [REDACTED] s6(b)(ii)

[REDACTED] s6(a)

6. Engagements with Presidential Adviser on Security, Faiza Abou el-Naga and Ambassador Swelam of the Cairo International Centre for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding were similarly positive, acknowledging New Zealand's previous support for demining in the Western Desert, and support to peacekeeping training.

7. We attended a valuable roundtable discussion at the Embassy with Five Nation Heads of Mission and Defence Attaches, covering a range of domestic and regional security issues.

8. Following engagements in Cairo, we travelled to Sharm El-Sheikh at the southern end of the Sinai Peninsula. The bulk of MFO forces redeployed here following extremist attacks in northern Sinai in 2013. The NZDF contingent conducts driving tasks, provides driver training support for the wider MFO, and engineering leadership for the wide range of projects underway on the base.

[REDACTED] s6(a)

[REDACTED] s6(b)(ii)

9. [REDACTED] s6(a)

**Israel**

10. Our visit to Israel included a meeting with the UNTSO Force Commander, and visit to Israel-occupied Golan Heights, meetings with Prime Minister (and Defence Minister) Benjamin Netanyahu, and Director-General of the Ministry of Defence Major General Udi Adam, and a call on the Defence Industry company Elbit Systems.

11. We met with the UNTSO Force Commander Major General Kristin Lund (Norway) at their Headquarters in Jerusalem. Referencing UNSC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, Lund expressed a wish to see New Zealand, as a high quality troop contributing nation, take a lead on female representation on deployments [REDACTED] s9(2)(a)

12. [REDACTED] s6(a)

13. Following this meeting both delegations proceeded to Israel-occupied Golan Heights. The security situation is now sufficiently resolved that there was tourist activity at a previous observation post, now the site of a café.. [REDACTED] s6(a)

14. The following day we met with the Director General of the Israeli Defence Force, Major General Udi Adam. [REDACTED] s6(a)

[REDACTED] s6(a)

15. [REDACTED] s6(a)

16.

s6(a)

17.

s6(a)

### South Sudan

18. Our visit to South Sudan came at a time when there are glimmers of hope for the country's peace process, albeit with manifold risks remaining. The Revised Agreement for the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan was signed on 12 September 2018. New Zealand is providing both the SRSG (David Shearer) and the Force Chief of Staff (a NZDF Brigadier). In addition NZDF UNMOs and are the only non-African nation that still allows its staff to operate outside of the capital Juba. There is currently one NZDF UNMO in Malakal (near the border with Sudan) and Yambio (near the border with Democratic Republic of Congo).

19. Our visit commenced with a visit with Minister of Defence and Veterans Affairs, Kuol Manyang, a veteran of South Sudan's long independence struggle. Minister Kuol noted the cessation of hostilities between government and opposition forces.

s6(b)(i)

20.

s6(b)(i)

s6(b)(i)

21. We were very pleased to meet with SRSG David Shearer and other UNMISS staff during our visit to Juba, and hear their views on the complex challenges faced by the peace process. s6(b)(ii)

However insecurity and intercommunal violence remained massive issues: there had been 180 deaths in the week prior during two cattle raiding incidents.

22. Currently 54% of UNMISS efforts are allocated to the 'protection of civilians' sites that were created near UN positions during previous periods of fighting. SRSG Shearer is keen to support repatriation from these sites, as shrinking numbers over time would liberate resources which could be used for patrolling, further increasing community security.

23. Looking ahead to the reconsideration of UNMISS's mandate in March, s6(b)(ii)

24. SRSG Shearer was highly complimentary of the quality of the NZDF contribution to UNMISS. Shearer was upfront in saying that he would like to see more Kiwis in the mission, s6(b)(ii)

25. The UNMISS Force Commander, Lieutenant General Frank Kamanzi (Rwanda) was grateful for the NZDF contribution, including the Force Chief of Staff role. s6(b)(ii)

## Summary

26. At a time of shifting regional security concerns, this trip provided a valuable opportunity to engage directly with key interlocutors in the region, reiterate New Zealand's support for the rules-based order, gain insights into current and future concerns, and understand the value of NZDF commitments. I was very pleased

to be accompanied by the Hon Tim Macindoe, demonstrating that at a high level the New Zealand approach to security challenges is generally bipartisan.

27. It was heartening to see and repeatedly hear of the positive impact of our Defence professionals in the operational theatres in which they served. The quality of our personnel continues to provide the government with a range of options to support New Zealand's policy on regional and global security issues.

s9(2)(g)(i)

28. On a personal note it was extremely rewarding to visit the Multinational Force and Observers locations in the Sinai Peninsula, Egypt, where I served in 1982 and 1983. While the form of the mission, and the threat that it faces has changed significantly in the intervening years, the structure that we established following the signing of the Peace Treaty has endured, and is now seen as a model for steps towards enduring peace in other conflicts including Syria and Yemen.

#### **Proactive Release**

29. I propose to proactively release this paper within 30 business days. This release will be subject to redaction as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

#### **Recommendations**

30. I recommend that Cabinet:

**Note** this report

Hon Ron Mark  
**Minister of Defence**

5 March 2018