

HON RON MARK, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Ministerial Overseas Travel 13-11-2019 to 20-11-2019

July 2020

This publication provides Cabinet documents regarding the proposal, and the report for Hon Ron Mark on his travel, from 13 to 20 November 2019, to Singapore for the 3rd annual Singapore-New Zealand Defence Ministers' Meeting and Bangkok, Thailand for the 6th annual ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- the October 2019 Cabinet minute of decision: *Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark* [CAB-19-MIN-0546]
- the associated Cabinet paper: *Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark: Singapore and Thailand – 13 to 20 November 2019* [CAB-19-SUB-0546]
- the February 2020 Cabinet minute of decision: *Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark* [CAB-20-MIN-0041]
- the associated Cabinet paper: *Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark* [CAB-20-SUB-0041]

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

www.defence.govt.nz/publications.

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

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

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



Cabinet

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.

Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark

Portfolio **Defence**

On 21 October 2019, Cabinet:

- 1 **authorised** the absence of Hon Ron Mark from New Zealand, from 13 to 20 November 2019, to travel to:
 - 1.1 Singapore to attend the 3rd annual Singapore-New Zealand Defence Ministers' Meeting;
 - 1.2 Bangkok, Thailand to attend the 6th annual ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus;
- 2 **agreed** that he be accompanied by one member of staff;
- 3 **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to \$22,470 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party, as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs (Members of the Executive – Travel);
- 4 **noted** that he will be accompanied by officials from the New Zealand Defence Force and the Ministry of Defence whose travel costs will be met from their respective votes;
- 5 **agreed** that in his absence the Rt Hon Winston Peters act as Minister of Defence and Minister for Veterans;
- 6 **noted** that leave from Parliament has been approved by the Party Whip.

Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet

Hard-copy distribution:

Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Minister
Hon Ron Mark

Office of the Minister of Defence

Chair, Cabinet

Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark: Singapore and Thailand – 13 to 20 November 2019

- 1 I seek Cabinet approval to travel to Singapore and Bangkok, Thailand from 13 to 20 November to attend the 3rd annual Singapore-New Zealand Defence Ministers' Meeting and the 6th annual ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus.
- 2 The Prime Minister has approved the travel in-principle, and House leave has been approved from the Party Whip.

Purpose of Travel

Singapore

- 3 The purpose of my travel to Singapore is to attend the 3rd annual Singapore-New Zealand Defence Ministers' Meeting. An annual ministerial dialogue was established in 2017 as part of a strategic refresh of the bilateral defence relationship in the lead up to the Enhanced Partnership.
- 4 This will be the first time I have visited Singapore in a solely bilateral capacity. It is an opportunity to share our perspectives on major security issues, reinforce the importance of the bilateral relationship s6(a)
[REDACTED] My programme is expected to include a formal bilateral meeting with my counterpart; meetings with other security sector Ministers; a visit to the Maritime Security International Fusion Cell where one NZDF naval officer is seconded; and a wreath laying ceremony at Kranji Cemetery.

Thailand

- 5 The purpose of my travel to Thailand is to attend the 6th annual ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus). New Zealand has been represented at the Ministerial-level each year (with the exception of 2017 due to the post-election period).
- 6 The ADMM-Plus is an important defence dialogue for New Zealand as it promotes understanding, builds habits of dialogue and facilitates practical defence cooperation between the eighteen members. Within this framework, New Zealand and the Philippines have been the co-chairs of the Cyber Security Experts' Working Group since 2017.

- 7 The ADMM-Plus meeting proper will feature plenary discussions on regional security issues and will conclude with the signing of a joint statement. The meeting will be attended by defence ministers from ASEAN and the 'plus members' Australia, China, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Russia, United States. I will conduct a series of bilateral meetings with counterparts on the margins. Thailand's Prime Minister is the current Minister of Defence and will chair the meeting, as is tradition I will seek a call on him in his capacity as host.

Ministerial Party

- 8 I propose to travel with one staff member from my office and officials from the New Zealand Defence Force and Ministry of Defence. Officials' travel will be funded by their respective agencies.

Travel Costs

- 9 List the estimated costs of the travel:

Airfares:	\$16000
Accommodation:	\$5000
Hospitality or gifts:	\$400
Contingency (5%):	\$1070

Total: \$ 22470

Acting Ministers

- 10 The Rt Hon Winston Peters has agreed to act in the Defence and Veterans portfolios from 13 to 20 November 2019.

Proactive release

- 11 I propose to proactively release this travel request, along with the travel report, following the conclusion of my travel.

Recommendations

- 12 I recommend that Cabinet:

- 12.1 **authorise** my absence from New Zealand from 13 to 20 November 2019 to travel to Singapore and Bangkok, Thailand to attend the 3rd annual Singapore-New Zealand Defence Ministers' Meeting and the 6th annual ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus;
- 12.2 **agree** that I be accompanied by one member of staff, and officials from the New Zealand Defence Force and the Ministry of Defence whose travel costs will be met from their respective votes;
- 12.3 **approve** the estimated expenditure of \$22470 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party, as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs Members of the Executive – Travel;

- 12.4 **agree** that in my absence the Rt Hon Winston Peters will act in the Defence and Veterans Portfolios; and
- 12.5 **note** that I will be absent from Cabinet on Monday 18 November 2019, and that leave from Parliament has been approved by the Party Whip.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Ron Mark

Minister of Defence

Released by the Minister of Defence



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark

Portfolio **Defence**

On 24 February 2020, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Ron Mark under CAB-20-SUB-0041 on his travel, from 13 to 20 November 2019 to:

- 1 Singapore to attend and co-host the 3rd annual Singapore-New Zealand Defence Ministers' Meeting;
- 2 Bangkok, Thailand to attend the 6th annual ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus.

Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet

Hard-copy distribution:

Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Minister
Hon Ron Mark

Released by the Minister of Defence

Office of the Minister for Defence

Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark

- 1 I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Singapore and Bangkok, Thailand from 13 to 20 November 2019 to attend the 3rd annual Singapore-New Zealand Defence Ministers' Meeting and the 6th annual ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus.

Report

Singapore

- 2 My bilateral visit to Singapore was held over 14 to 16 November 2019. The purpose of my visit was to co-host the 3rd annual Singapore-New Zealand Defence Ministers Meeting and conduct a counterpart visit to Singapore where I was hosted by Minister of Defence, Dr Ng Eng Hen.
- 3 The formal Minister's Meeting focussed on bilateral defence cooperation, regional security architecture, countering violent extremism, and major power competition. I also had formal courtesy calls on Prime Minister Lee and Deputy Prime Minister Heng, these discussions highlighted our close alignment on regional strategic issues. In both meetings we exchanged views on shared security challenges including climate change and extremism. Both sides were pleased with the implementation of the Enhanced Partnership.
- 4 The visit deepened my understanding of Singapore's history and defence system. My programme included visits to: the bicentennial exhibition celebrating 200 years since the arrival of Stanford Raffles and a wreath laying at Kranji War Cemetery. In addition I visited Dieppe Barracks where NZDF were based for almost 20 years, the New Zealand Defence Support Unit at Sembawang Air Force base where NZDF continues to have a permanent presence and the International Fusion Centre where NZDF has a reserve naval officer embedded. These visits highlighted NZ's longstanding involvement and presence in Singapore.
- 5 Overall, it was a useful visit and provided the opportunity for both sides to update one another on defence and security issues. The annual Defence Ministers' Meeting was established in 2017 as part of a strategic refresh of the bilateral defence relationship in the lead up to the Enhanced Partnership, the 4th annual meeting will be hosted in New Zealand in late-2020.

Thailand

- 6 I represented New Zealand at the 6th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) in Bangkok over 17-19 November 2019. My wider programme included bilateral calls with counterparts; a gala dinner hosted by Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister (Security), General Prawit Wongsuwan; the ADMM-Plus ministerial meeting proper; a heads of delegation meeting with Thailand's Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-Cha; and a lunch hosted by the New Zealand Ambassador with key Thai commentators and senior Foreign Affairs officials.
- 7 At the ADMM-Plus meeting national interventions focused on: the South China Sea Code of Conduct negotiations; the impact of rapid advances in technology; and welcoming of the ASEAN Indo-Pacific Outlook. New Zealand's intervention highlighted the common issue of climate change and its impact on the Pacific region. The eighteen member states issued a joint statement at the conclusion of the meeting highlighting the importance of the cooperation that occurs at all levels under the ADMM-Plus framework.
- 8 I had formal bilateral meetings with my counterparts from Viet Nam, the Republic of Korea, Philippines, Malaysia, Japan, Indonesia, India, China, Thailand and Australia.
- 9 This year's ADMM-Plus had a number of major side events alongside the main plenary meeting, including a concurrent Defence and Security Expo, and an interagency Counter Terrorism and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief demonstration.
- 10 At the lunch hosted by New Zealand's Ambassador in Bangkok, Thai interlocutors were positive about the bilateral relationship with New Zealand and welcomed the recent positive trajectory of high-level bilateral contacts as a mechanism for looking at areas where links could be deepened across the security agenda.
- 11 The ADMM-Plus framework has gone from strength to strength over the past nine-years. It usefully facilitates practical cooperation at the working level over eight thematic working groups and brings officials together three times a year to review working group progress and discuss regional security matters. The framework cumulates with a ministerial meeting at the end of each year. Having eighteen regional Defence Ministers at one table is a feat and allows for a useful exchange of views, as well as encouraging habits of dialogue.

Proactive release

- 12 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.

Recommendation

13 I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. **note** this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Ron Mark

Minister for Defence

Released by the Minister of Defence