

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

### **Deployment to the UN Command in the Republic of Korea**

November 2019

This publication provides documents on Cabinet's July 2019 decision to extend the deployment of New Zealand Defence Force personnel to the United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission and the United Nations Command Headquarters in the Republic of Korea, from 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2021.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- the Cabinet minute of decision: *Deployment to the United Nations Command in the Republic of Korea* [ERS-19-MIN-0018]
- the associated Cabinet paper *Deployment of the United Nations Command in the Republic of Korea* [ERS-19-SUB-0018].

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)].



# Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee

## 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.*

### Deployment to the United Nations Command in the Republic of Korea

**Portfolios** Foreign Affairs / Defence

On 23 July 2019, the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee (ERS):

#### Background

- 1 **noted** that New Zealand currently contributes five personnel to the United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission and one person to the United Nations Command in the Republic of Korea, with a mandate to 31 August 2019 [ERD-17-MIN-0018];
- 2 **noted** that the legal basis for New Zealand's involvement in the United Nations Command and its Military Armistice Commission is reliant on the *Meyer Agreement* of 1952;
- 3 **noted** that the security situation on the Korean Peninsula remains one of the key regional and global security concerns, and that ongoing contributions to the United Nations Korean Peninsula security architecture are needed to support the maintenance of peace and stability;
- 4 **noted** that extending New Zealand's contribution in the Republic of Korea demonstrates an ongoing commitment to maintaining security and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in the North Asia region, [REDACTED] s6(a)

#### Proposed deployments

- 5 **agreed** to extend the commitment of five personnel to the United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission and one person to the United Nations Command Headquarters for two years, from 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2021;

6

[REDACTED] s6(a)

7

[REDACTED] s6(a)

s6(a)

9

s6(a)

10

s6(a)

11 **noted** that the overall operational threat to NZDF personnel deployed to the Republic of Korea is assessed as s6(a),

12 **agreed** that the NZDF may temporarily exceed the Cabinet-mandated personnel numbers for New Zealand's Republic of Korea deployment for the purposes of command reconnaissance, rotation, and extraction of forces from theatre [CAB-18-MIN-0346];

### Financial implications

13 **noted** that the total estimated cost of s6(a) proposed deployment s6(a) from 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2021 is assessed as s6(a);

14 **noted** that estimated costs in 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 for s6(a) proposed deployment s6(a) 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

#### 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

#### Hard-copy distribution:

Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Minister of Defence

Chair  
External Relations and Security Committee

## DEPLOYMENT TO THE UNITED NATIONS COMMAND IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

### Proposal

1. This paper seeks Cabinet approval to extend the deployment of six New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel to the United Nations Command (the Command) and the United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission (the Commission), from 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2021. [REDACTED] s6(a)

### Executive summary

2. The security situation on the Korean Peninsula is of great importance to the stability of the Asia-Pacific, and an outbreak of hostilities there would have a global impact. It is therefore in New Zealand's best interests to support the maintenance of peace on the Korean Peninsula.

3. Since 1998, successive New Zealand Governments have supported peace on the Korean Peninsula through deploying personnel to the United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission (the Commission) and, as of 2017, the United Nations Command (the Command), in the Republic of Korea (ROK). Along with the United Nations Command-Rear (the Command-Rear) in Japan, these three organisations form the basis of the United Nations Korean Peninsula security architecture. This architecture supports the implementation of the Korean Armistice Agreement by the ROK, and promotes positive engagement and de-escalation with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) on the border of the two Koreas.

4. [REDACTED] s6(a)  
[REDACTED] Active support, through deployments of NZDF personnel, continues to represent a targeted and meaningful way for New Zealand to positively contribute to peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific. [REDACTED] s6(a)

5. The current deployment mandate for six NZDF personnel to the ROK expires on 31 August 2019. This paper proposes extending the mandate out to 31 August 2021, [REDACTED] s6(a)

## Background

### *Security situation update*

6. The security situation on the Korean Peninsula remains one of the key regional and global security concerns. Since the previous Government last reconfirmed New Zealand's longstanding NZDF deployment to the the Command and the Commission [ERD-17-MIN-0018 refers], the DPRK has retained its proven nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles capability [REDACTED] s6(a)

7. Throughout 2018/19 there have been several major political and diplomatic initiatives relating to the security situation on the Korean Peninsula. These have included a range of Summit meetings, and the Comprehensive Military Agreement between the ROK and DPRK, which saw both countries commit to demilitarisation activities in the DMZ. [REDACTED] s6(a)

[REDACTED] Ongoing contributions to the Command, the Commission and the Command-Rear are needed to support the maintenance of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and to sustain the current climate conducive to engagement and cooperation.

### *Korean Peninsula United Nations Security Architecture*

8. The Command is a multinational body established in 1950 to defend the ROK. [REDACTED] s6(a)

[REDACTED] the UN Security Council delegated executive authority of the Command to the US when it was established, rather than the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations or Department of Political Affairs. Of the 21 countries that provided combat and medical support during the Korean War, 16 are all still actively involved with the Command.<sup>1</sup>

9. The Command conducts a range of activities in support of its mission to defend South Korea. [REDACTED] s6(a)

10. The Commission is responsible for administering the terms of the Armistice Agreement signed at the cessation of hostilities. The Commission is responsible for conducting regular inspections of the Korean Armed Forces stationed inside the DMZ; identifying and investigating breaches of the Armistice Agreement; and conducting education activities for South Korean military personnel.<sup>2</sup>

11. For historical reasons, a small element of the Command also remains in Japan, called the Command-Rear.<sup>3</sup> [REDACTED] s6(a)

<sup>1</sup> The current contributors include Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, France, Greece, Italy, Philippines, Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the US. [REDACTED] s6(a)

<sup>2</sup> The Commission was originally set up as a joint body between the Command and the Korean People's Army (North Korea's armed forces), each providing five officers. After North Korea withdrew from the Commission in 1994, the Command's component was directed to continue its duties from the southern side of the DMZ.

<sup>3</sup> The Command was established in Japan in 1950, as the ongoing war in Korea made this the most practical location. In 1957, the Command was re-located from Tokyo to Seoul, but the Command-Rear element remained in Japan.

s6(a)

12. s6(a)

13. s6(a)

#### *New Zealand's current contributions to the Commission and the Command*

14. New Zealand's commitments to the Commission (responsible for administering the terms of the Korean Armistice Agreement) are longstanding, spanning back to 1998. Since that time New Zealand's contributions on the Korean Peninsula have played an anchor role in our contributions to support peace and security in North East Asia.

15. The NZDF currently has five personnel deployed to the Commission's Secretariat, s6(a) The Secretariat is responsible for carrying out the day-to-day tasks of the Commission, and is led by a US Army Colonel.

16. Three of the five NZDF personnel are based at the Commission Secretariat's headquarters at US Army Garrison (USAG) Humphreys, which is the principal US military base in the ROK, 80 kilometres south of Seoul. One officer leads the Armistice Education programme, while another is responsible for coordinating and planning Armistice inspections, investigations, and other activities in the DMZ. A senior non-commissioned officer supports the DMZ Operations section. All three officers are required to travel to the DMZ on a regular basis s6(a)

17. The other two NZDF officers deployed to the Commission Secretariat are based within the DMZ. One officer facilitates communication between the Command and the Korean People's Army and supervises high level visits to the Joint Security Area. The second officer is an Assistance Corridor Control Officer, responsible for daily vehicle movements between the DPRK and ROK by opening the southern portion of the DMZ.

18. Since 2017, New Zealand has also deployed an officer into the Command Headquarters s6(a)

19. s6(a)

#### *The legal basis for deployments*

20. The *Meyer Agreement* of May 1952 provides the legal basis for Command and Commission personnel to operate in the ROK. The *Agreement regarding the Status of the United Nations Forces in Japan* of 1954 provides the legal basis for Command-Rear personnel to operate in Japan.

21. New Zealand does not have bilateral Status of Forces Agreements with either the ROK or Japan. [REDACTED] s6(a)

**Continued contributions to the UN Command are in alignment with New Zealand's interests**

22. New Zealand deployments to the Command and the Commission represent a targeted and meaningful contribution to maintaining peace and security on the Korean Peninsula. It is currently New Zealand's only fixed deployment in the Asia-Pacific – a region of strategic importance to New Zealand. At the same time, the contribution aligns with a range of deep-seated interests, as noted below.

23. New Zealand's national security interests are directly linked to the maintenance of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. [REDACTED] s6(a)

[REDACTED] The United Nations Korean Peninsula security architecture, led by the US, has been central in maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula since the conclusion of the Korean War in 1953. [REDACTED] s6(a)

[REDACTED] New Zealand's current contributions to the Command and the Commission support that maintenance of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.

24. New Zealand can also make important contributions to the security situation on the Korean Peninsula through the monitoring of United Nations Security Council sanctions resolutions against the DPRK. These activities seek to counter the avoidance of sanctions by the DPRK, and maintain pressure on the DPRK to denuclearise and abandon its ballistic missile programs. New Zealand last contributed in this effort through a deployment of a P-3K2 aircraft and personnel in September/October 2018 [CAB-18-MIN-0390 refers]. A deployment Cabinet paper proposing further contributions in this area is being prepared for the External Relations and Security Cabinet Committee on 27 August.

*Supporting New Zealand's bilateral relationships with our partners*

[REDACTED] s6(a)

26. New Zealand's contributions support the continued peace and prosperity of the ROK. They further build on the history of New Zealand support, which first started with the service of 6,000 New Zealanders during the Korean War. [REDACTED] s6(a)

27. [REDACTED] s6(a) The deployments provide the opportunity for connections to be built between NZDF and US Armed Forces

[REDACTED] s6(a)

personnel, and help to enhance interoperability and familiarity between our defence organisations. [redacted] s6(a)

[redacted] s6(a)

*Supporting the international rules-based order and the maintenance of peace*

29. The Command and Commission are not tasked with permanently resolving the issues that have divided the Korean Peninsula between North and South since 1953. They are, however, tasked with supporting the maintenance of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. New Zealand's deployments support this effort, and also support the authority of the UN as an arbiter of interstate conflicts, and a proponent of post-conflict resolution and peace-building.

30. The international rules-based order relies on the endurance of key peace agreements such as the Korean Armistice Agreement to demonstrate that through diplomacy, the international community – particularly through the UN – can come together and cooperate to prevent conflict and maintain peace.

[redacted] s6(a)

**Aligning the NZDF deployment with New Zealand's interests**

32. The contribution New Zealand makes currently is highly worthwhile and delivers valuable outcomes. This deployment is an important part of New Zealand's contributions to peace and security in the North East Asia region, and its continuation would ensure New Zealand's ongoing engagement and experience with regional security issues.

33. [redacted] s6(a)

34. [redacted] s6(a)

[redacted] s6(a)

[redacted] s6(a)

35. No combination [redacted] s6(a) presented to Government would prevent New Zealand from independently deploying to the Pacific should an emergency arise.

[redacted] s6(a)



s6(a)

37. s6(a)

38. s6(a)

s6(a)

39. s6(a)

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41. s6(a)

42. s6(a)

43. s6(a)

44. s6(a)

Released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and  
the Minister of Defence

s6(a)

## Threat Assessment

46. [REDACTED] s6(a)

The overall operational threat to NZDF personnel deployed to the ROK is assessed as [REDACTED] s6(a) [REDACTED] s6(a)

47. The NZDF continually monitors these operational threat levels, with adjustments made according to developments in the security environment. The Ministers of Defence and Foreign Affairs will be notified immediately should operational threat levels change.

### *Mitigation measures*

48. NZDF personnel serving with the Commission are accommodated on base with 24 hour security. [REDACTED] s6(a)

49. The UN Command is an unarmed mission. [REDACTED] s6(a)

s6(a)

## Rotations

53. 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.

## Financial Implications

54. [redacted] s6(a) the cost of the deployment from 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2021 is estimated to be between \$2.170M and [redacted] s6(a). The estimated cost of the deployment [redacted] s6(a) are summarised in the table below:

| Estimated cost of proposed deployments                                     | NZ \$million |         |         |         | Total |
|--|--------------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
|  | 2019/20      | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 |       |
| Continue New Zealand's deployment of six personnel to the Korean Peninsula | 0.944        | 1.084   | 0.142   | -       | 2.170 |

[redacted] s6(a)

55. [redacted] s6(a) the estimated expenditure will be funded from Crown Revenue and can be met from the existing funding for Vote Defence Force: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests MCA.

## Consultation

56. The Ministry of Defence, the New Zealand Defence Force and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade have prepared this paper. The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and Treasury have been consulted.

## Publicity

57. If Cabinet approves this deployment, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence will issue a press release outlining New Zealand's continued contribution to the United Nations Korean Peninsula security architecture as part of our ongoing commitment to maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. Our partners will be informed separately through normal diplomatic and military channels.

## Proactive Release

58. A redacted version of this Cabinet paper will be prepared for proactive release.

## Recommendations

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

1. **note** that New Zealand currently contributes five personnel to the United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission and one person to the United Nations Command in the Republic of Korea with a mandate to 31 August 2019;
2. **note** the legal basis for New Zealand's involvement in the United Nations Command and its Military Armistice Commission is reliant on the *Meyer Agreement* of 1952;

3. **note** that the security situation on the Korean Peninsula remains one of the key regional and global security concerns, and ongoing contributions to the United Nations Korean Peninsula security architecture are needed to support the maintenance of peace and stability;
4. **note** that extending New Zealand's contribution in the Republic of Korea demonstrates our ongoing commitment to maintaining security and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in the North Asia region, s6(a)  
[REDACTED]
5. **agree** to extend the commitment of five personnel to the United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission and one person to the United Nations Command Headquarters for two years from 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2021;
6. s6(a)  
[REDACTED]
7. s6(a)  
[REDACTED]
8. s6(a)  
[REDACTED]
9. s6(a)  
[REDACTED]
10. s6(a)  
[REDACTED]
11. **note** that the overall operational threat to New Zealand Defence Force personnel deployed to the Republic of Korea is assessed as s6(a)  
[REDACTED];
12. **agree** that the New Zealand Defence Force may temporarily exceed the Cabinet-mandated personnel numbers for New Zealand's Republic of Korea deployment for the purposes of command reconnaissance, rotation, and extraction of forces from theatre;
13. **note** that the total estimated cost of s6(a) proposed deployment s6(a) from 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2021 is assessed as s6(a)
14. **note** that estimated costs in 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 for s6(a) proposed deployment s6(a) can be met from within the existing Vote Defence Force: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests MCA.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Ron Mark  
**MINISTER OF DEFENCE**

/ / 2019

Rt Hon Winston Peters  
**MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

/ / 2019

Released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and  
the Minister of Defence