



Minute of Decision

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International Response to the Threat of ISIL: Possible New Zealand Contribution

Portfolios: Defence / Foreign Affairs

On 23 February 2015, Cabinet:

1 noted that the Islamic State in Iraq (ISIL) represents a multi-dimensional threat to international peace and security, including to New Zealand and New Zealand's interests;

2 noted that the Government of Iraq has requested international security assistance to help it combat ISIL, as well as to provide humanitarian and development support;

3 noted that Australia and New Zealand have explored a potential Building Partner Capacity mission in Taji, Iraq, to train Iraqi Security Forces;

4 noted that this mission would provide a positive contribution towards our objectives of reducing the global threat from ISIL in keeping with New Zealand's size and capacity;

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6(a)

6 noted that national security agencies are working to identify, monitor and mitigate domestic threats, and will advise Ministers on any changes to the domestic situation and their implications as appropriate;

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6(a)

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9(2)(j)

9 noted that officials:

9.1 will negotiate alternative legal arrangements with Iraq to provide protections to the New Zealand deployment;

9.2

9(2)(j)

- 10 **noted** that further advice will be provided to the group of Ministers with Power to Act listed in paragraph 12 setting out the proposed threat mitigation measures, command arrangements, training arrangements and the outcomes of discussions with Iraq on the legal status of NZDF personnel in Iraq following the reconnaissance visit and further discussions with the Iraqi Government;
- 11 **agreed**, subject to the agreement of the Ministers with Power to Act to the advice referred to in paragraph 10, that New Zealand make a military contribution to a joint Australia-New Zealand Building Partner Capacity mission in Taji, consisting of the deployment of 106 personnel to Taji, and 37 personnel to coalition headquarters and support locations in the region, for a period of two years from the time of arrival in Iraq, with a review occurring after nine months for subsequent consideration by Cabinet;
- 12 **authorised** the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Defence, the Attorney-General and the Minister of Foreign Affairs to have Power to Act to confirm the final Building Partner Capacity deployment;
- 13 **agreed** to the deployment of staff officers as soon as practicable 6(9)
- 14 **authorised** the Minister of Defence, in consultation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to make adjustments to the deployment in response to operational requirements, provided that these adjustments do not significantly change numbers, the cost or the intent of the mission;
- 15 **noted** that in March 2012, the Cabinet External Relations and Defence Committee:
- 15.1 agreed to the inclusion in all Cabinet submissions establishing or renewing operational mandates 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;
- 15.2 agreed that the Chief of Defence Force be required to inform the Minister of Defence in advance whenever this occurs;
- [ERD Min (12) 2/6]
- 16 **confirmed** the decision set out in paragraph 15;
- 17 **noted** that the Chief of Defence Force will inform the Minister of Defence in advance whenever Cabinet-mandated personnel numbers are exceeded for the reasons set out in paragraph 15;
- 18 **noted** that officials will explore options to establish a diplomatic presence in Baghdad, Iraq, to supplement the formal accreditation to Iraq which sits with the New Zealand Embassy in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, to support the Building Partner Capacity mission;
- 19 **noted** that the full suite of possible diplomatic contributions will continue to be assessed as the coalition work programme develops, but will include:
- 19.1 work in the United Nations Security Council;
- 19.2 augmented engagement with regional and multilateral forums in counter terrorism cooperation;
- 19.3 bolstering of New Zealand's security relationships in the Middle East;

- 19.4 closer cooperation with partners in South East Asia;
- 19.5 participating in the coalition working groups on Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Countering Terrorist Financing;
- 20 **noted** that the total estimated marginal cost of the proposed New Zealand Defence Force Building Partner Capacity deployment for a period of two years from 1 May 2015 to 30 April 2017 is assessed at \$65.250 million;
- 21 **noted** that the total estimated costs of the proposed Building Partner Capacity deployment of \$8.930 million in 2014-2015 can be met from within the existing funded Multi Category Appropriation 'Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests' in Vote Defence Force without any impact on the operating balance or budget allowances;
- 22 **noted** the total estimated cost of the proposed Building Partner Capacity deployment in 2015-2016 of \$30.720 million and in 2016-2017 of \$25.600 million is unable to be met from the currently planned appropriations in Vote Defence Force and will require an additional appropriation of \$15.526 million in 2015-2016 and \$9.847 million in 2016-2017 respectively;
- 23 **noted** that some costs for the proposed Building Partner Capacity deployment are yet to be finalised and should the final cost estimates materially change from those outlined in the paper under CAB (15) 71 a separate submission will be provided to Cabinet by the NZDF to update the costs;
- 24 **approved** the following changes to appropriations with a corresponding impact on the operating balance:

Vote Defence Force Minister of Defence	\$m – increase/(decrease)				
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19 & Outyears
Multi Category Appropriation:					
Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests					
Departmental Output Expense:					
Military Operations in Support of a:					
- Rules-based International Order		15.526	9.847	0.000	0.000
- Building Partner Capacity mission					
Total Operating	0.000	15.526	9.847	0.000	0.000

25 **agreed** that the expenses incurred under paragraph 11 be charged as a pre-commitment against the Budget 2015 operating allowance.

Secretary of the Cabinet

Reference: CAB (15) 71

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