



New Zealand
**DEFENCE
FORCE**
Te Ope Kōtus o Aotearoa



**MANATŪ KAUPAPA
WAONGA**
NEW ZEALAND
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Submission to the Minister of Defence

UPDATE ON THE PLANNED DEPLOYMENT OF NZDF AIR AND NAVAL ASSETS TO THE SOUTH EAST ASIA REGION FROM SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 2021

MoD ref: 96-2021

NZDF tracking: 2021-287

Type of submission:	Noting Submission	For action by:	Routine
Addressed to:	Minister of Defence	For referral to:	Prime Minister
For referral to:	Minister of Foreign Affairs	For referral to:	
Purpose:	To provide you an overview of the planned deployment of Her Majesty's New Zealand Ships AOTEAROA and TE KAHA, and a P-3K2 maritime patrol aircraft to the South East Asia region.		
Cost:	N/A		
Current status:	N/A		
Key risks / Limitations:	N/A		

Recommendations:

- a) Note the deployment plan for New Zealand Defence Force assets, including Her Majesty's New Zealand Ships AOTEAROA and TE KAHA, and a P-3K2 maritime patrol aircraft, to the South East Asia region over the period September to November 2021: Yes / No

s6(a)

- c) Note that officials will provide you with regular updates on this deployment through routine weekly reporting: Yes / No
- d) Refer this note to the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs for information: and Yes / No

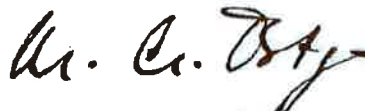
s6(a)



HON PEENI HENARE
Minister of Defence
Date:



KR SHORT
Air Marshal
Chief of Defence Force
Date: 09 SEP 21



ANDREW BRIDGMAN
Secretary of Defence
Date: 15th September 2021

NZDF contact:	BRIG Mike Shapland	Ph:	[Redacted] s9(2)(a)
MOD contact:	Kathryn Pearce	Ph:	[Redacted]
Agencies involved:	New Zealand Defence Force, Ministry of Defence		

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Secretary of Defence
Ministry of Defence

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVES

Defence House, Wellington, New Zealand



Chief of Defence Force
New Zealand Defence
Force

09 September 2021

Minister of Defence

UPDATE ON THE PLANNED DEPLOYMENT OF NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE AIR AND NAVAL ASSETS TO THE SOUTH EAST ASIA REGION FROM SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 2021

Purpose

1. To provide you an overview of the planned deployment of Her Majesty's New Zealand Ships (HMNZS) AOTEAROA and TE KAHA, and a P-3K2 maritime patrol aircraft to the South East Asia region.

Background

2. In June 2021, officials provided advance notice of the New Zealand Defence Force's (NZDF) intended deployment to South East Asia, noting this would include interaction with the United Kingdom (UK) Carrier Strike Group (CSG). We advised this would likely involve a transit of the South China Sea, and would complement our air and naval participation in the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) 50th Anniversary activity, Exercise BERSAMA GOLD. Officials also advised that the detailed deployment plan would be provided to you in September 2021.

3. Planning for this deployment continues in collaboration with partner nation militaries, including Australia, France, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and the UK. While the overarching plan is in place, details of the interaction with the CSG are still to be confirmed, and the CSG's plans may change during the deployment. In particular, the global COVID-19 pandemic continues to generate uncertainty as outbreaks within countries and [redacted] and made it more difficult to coordinate with South East Asian partners.

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Deployment Plan

5. HMNZS AOTEAROA and TE KAHA departed New Zealand on 8 September, and are scheduled to return on 12 November and 3 December respectively. The P-3K2 aircraft will depart New Zealand on 22 September and return on 20 October. The overall deployment is depicted in the map at Annex A.

6. The deployment programme is expected to include the activities listed below, although the final dates may change:

- 06 – 08 September. Naval deployment and work up training in the Hauraki Gulf.
- 08 – 21 September. Both ships transit to Guam. This will present an opportunity for naval interaction with French naval vessels based in New Caledonia.
- 21 – 27 September. Both ships complete a port visit to Guam. This will include operational testing and evaluation of HMNZS TE KAHA's recently upgraded systems. It will also present an opportunity for both ships to interact with elements of the US Navy's 7th Fleet.
- 22 September. P-3K2 maritime patrol aircraft, along with the air crew and supporting staff, will travel to Singapore and undergo managed isolation.
- 28 September – 06 October. Both ships will transit from Guam to Singapore. This will include a transit of the South China Sea (approximately 5-7 days), with naval vessels entering via the Luzon Strait and/or the Sulu Sea. This will present an opportunity to interact with a range of partners firstly in the Pacific Ocean, east of the Philippines, and then later within the South China Sea. These partners will include air and/or naval assets from the US Navy, the Japanese Self Defence Force, and the CSG. It is likely that some or all of the transit of the South China Sea will be in company with all or some elements of the CSG.
- 04 – 18 October. Ex BERSAMA GOLD. HMNZS TE KAHA, AOTEAROA and a P-3K2 maritime aircraft will participate in this activity, which will take place in the usual FPDA exercise areas off the east coast of the Malaysian peninsula.
- 05 – 06 October. P-3K2 air interactions with the CSG. These engagements are likely to take place within the South China Sea.
- 19 – 20 October. P-3K2 maritime patrol aircraft, crew, and supporting staff will return to New Zealand and undergo managed isolation.
- 21 October – 05 November. Both ships transit from South East Asia to Sydney, via the Indonesian Archipelago. The passage will be completed in company with Her Majesty's Australian Ship CANBERRA, and will also present opportunities for naval interactions with the Malaysian and Indonesian navies.
- 06 – 28 November. Naval training exercise off the east coast of Australia with the Australian Defence Force. HMNZS AOTEAROA will detach early and return to New

Zealand to undergo cold weather preparation for its inaugural visit to Antarctica in February 2022.

- 12 November. HMNZS AOTEAROA arrives in New Zealand.
- 03 December. HMNZS TE KAHA arrives in New Zealand.

7. A number of factors including weather, mechanical failures, access to ports and facilities, managed isolation requirements, and partner nation movements means there is a high degree of flexibility required when planning for the various engagements, including the interaction with the CSG. In addition operational security requirements for the NZDF and partners, means we are not able to forecast the exact location of key interactions or the route to be taken during the transit of the South China Sea. The NZDF has issued clear parameters for this deployment [redacted] s6(a)

[redacted] These parameters will enable naval and air assets a degree of operational flexibility while ensuring that their actions are aligned with New Zealand policy settings.

Risks and Mitigations

[redacted] s6(a)

[redacted] s6(b)(i)

[redacted] In July, the CSG exercised with the Royal Thai Navy and then later with the Malaysian and Singaporean navies. Singapore has supported the CSG's presence in the region by hosting the Royal Fleet Auxiliary tanker TIDESPRING for a port visit to replenish its stores, while the remainder of the CSG continued its programme in East Asia. Brunei also welcomed the Royal Navy destroyer, Her Majesty's Ship DEFENDER, for a three-day visit in July, to enable it to complete a number of defence engagement activities.

10. China has recently introduced a new maritime regulation requiring the notification of certain foreign vessels¹ "within its territorial waters". [redacted] s6(a)

Next steps

11. Officials will provide regular updates to your office as the deployment progresses through weekly Defence reporting. It is anticipated that there will be a number of minor amendments to the deployment programme in coordination with partners or in response to local conditions. You will be informed ahead of time if any changes involve activities or regions that may be politically sensitive.

Publicity

12. Talking points on New Zealand's interaction with the CSG, for use if approached by media, will be provided to your office. These will also be distributed to the offices of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

¹ These foreign vessels have been declared by China's state run Global Times to include operators of submersibles, nuclear vessels and ships carrying bulk oil, chemicals and radioactive materials.

13. A press release has been prepared on New Zealand's interaction with the CSG and will be released by the NZDF. A separate press release to commemorate the FPDA Defence Ministers Meeting and Exercise BERSAMA GOLD, will be provided to your office ahead of the commemorations.

Recommendations

14. It is recommended that you:

- a. **Note** the deployment plan for New Zealand Defence Force assets, including Her Majesty's New Zealand Ships AOTEAROA and TE KAHA, and a P-3K2 maritime patrol aircraft, to the South East Asia region over the period September to November 2021;

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- c. **Note** that officials will provide you with regular updates on this deployment through routine weekly reporting;
- d. **Refer** this note to the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs for information; and

s6(a)



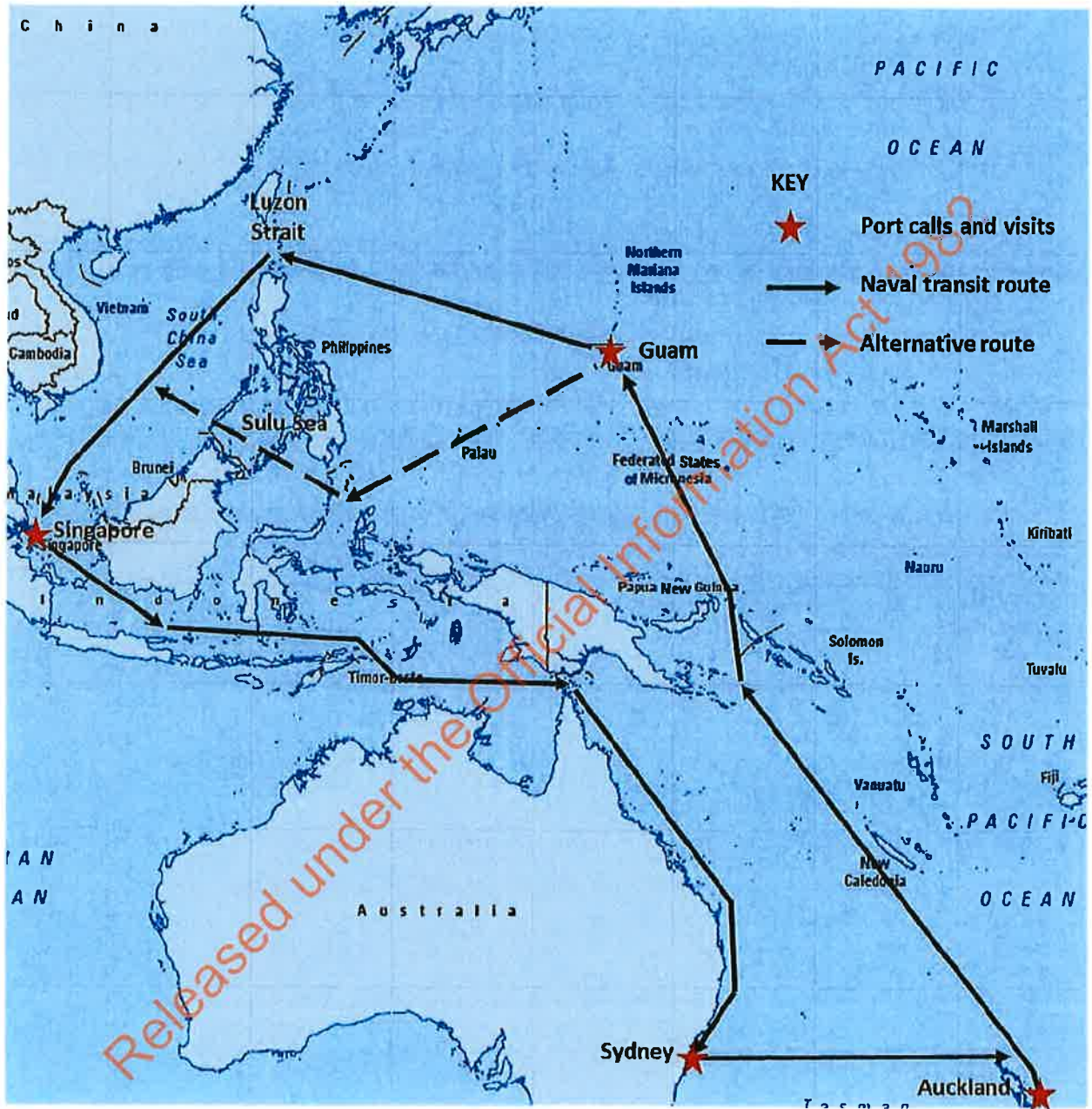
KR SHORT
Air Marshal
Chief of Defence Force



ANDREW BRIDGMAN
Secretary of Defence

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ANNEX A: DEPLOYMENT MAP



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**MANATŪ KAUPAPA
WAONGA**
NEW ZEALAND
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

AIDE MEMOIRE: DEPLOYMENT OF NZDF AIR AND NAVAL ASSETS TO THE SOUTH CHINA SEA. SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 2021

Decision sought: what am being I asking for?

s6(a)

- From September to November, the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) is deploying the ships AOTEAROA and TE KAHA and a P-3K2 maritime patrol aircraft to the South East Asian region to undertake numerous defence activities. The deployment will involve NZDF activity in the South China Sea.
- On 8 September, the ships AOTEAROA and TE KAHA departed New Zealand. Prior to undertaking activities in the South China Sea, both ships will complete a port visit to Guam.

Activities in the South China Sea

- **From 28 September – 06 October**, the ships AOTEAROA and TE KAHA will transit from Guam to Singapore. This will include a transit of the South China Sea (approximately 5-7 days), with naval vessels entering via the Luzon Strait or the Sulu Sea, or both. This will present an opportunity to interact with a range of partners, including within the South China Sea. It is likely that some or all of the transit of the South China Sea will be in company with elements of the UK Carrier Strike Group (CSG).
- While in the region, both ships and the P-3K2 maritime aircraft will participate in the FPDA 50th anniversary exercise: **Ex BERSAMA GOLD** in October. This takes place in the usual FPDA exercise areas off the east coast of the Malaysian peninsula, and not in contested areas of the South China Sea.
- **From 05 – 06 October**, the P-3K2 will undertake air interactions with the CSG. This is likely to take place within the South China Sea.
- **From 21 October – 05 November**. Both ships will transit from South East Asia to Sydney, via the Indonesian Archipelago. The passage will be completed in company with the Australian Ship CANBERRA.

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Parameters and updates to the deployment

- The NZDF has issued clear parameters for this deployment. These parameters will enable naval and air assets a degree of operational flexibility while ensuring their actions are aligned

with New Zealand policy settings.

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- While the overarching deployment plan is in place, details of the interaction with the CSG are still to be confirmed. A number of factors including weather, mechanical failures, port access, managed isolation requirements, and partner nation movements mean a high degree of flexibility required when planning the various engagements.
- Defence officials will regularly update me on this deployment through weekly reporting. I will be informed ahead of time if any changes that involve activities or regions that may be sensitive.

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**MANATŪ KAUPAPA
WAONGA**
NEW ZEALAND
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

AIDE MEMOIRE: DEPLOYMENT OF NZDF AIR AND NAVAL ASSETS TO THE SOUTH CHINA SEA. SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2021

Decision sought:

s6(a)

- From September to November, the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) is deploying the ships HMNZS AOTEAROA and HMNZS TE KAHA, and a P-3K2 maritime patrol aircraft to the South East Asian region to undertake numerous defence activities.
- The aircraft departed New Zealand on 21 September. It is now in Singapore, with the aircrew completing managed isolation requirements. Both ships departed New Zealand on 8 September, and are now completing a port visit in Guam. They have not yet entered the South China Sea.
- Since the South China Sea deployment paper was submitted on 10 September, we have received new information. The key update is that in order to arrive in Singapore in time for the start of their key event, Exercise BERSAMA GOLD, the ships will now need to transit the South China Sea independently of the UK Carrier Strike Group (CSG).

Activities in the South China Sea

- **From 28 September – 06 October**, AOTEAROA and TE KAHA will sail from Guam to Singapore. The CSG's programme has changed several times in recent weeks, and as such our ship's own schedules have had to be adjusted to ensure they can meet all planned objectives. On departing Guam, AOTEAROA will have an opportunity to interact with the UK CSG, in waters east of the Philippines, and outside the South China Sea. On completion of this engagement, and to ensure they can be in position for the start of Exercise BERSAMA GOLD, AOTEAROA and TE KAHA will passage independently, through the Philippines and the South China Sea, to Singapore.
- **From 05 – 06 October**, the P-3K2 will undertake air interactions with the CSG. These are scheduled to take place within the South China Sea.
- **From 08 – 16 October**, both ships and the P-3K2 maritime aircraft will participate in Exercise BERSAMA GOLD, which is the FPDA's key 50th anniversary event. This will take place in FPDA exercise areas off the east coast of the Malaysian peninsula, and not in contested areas of the South China Sea.
- The P-3K2 will depart Singapore on 19 October for New Zealand. Both ships will depart Singapore on 21 October via the Indonesian Archipelago and Australia.

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Parameters and updates to the deployment

- The NZDF has issued clear parameters for this deployment. These parameters enable our air and naval assets a degree of operational flexibility while ensuring their actions are aligned with New Zealand policy settings s6(a)
- Defence officials will regularly update me on this deployment through weekly reporting. I will be informed ahead of time if any changes that involve activities or regions that may be sensitive.

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1 Oct 21

NZDF 2021-304

DOT-POINT BRIEF FOR MINISTER OF DEFENCE

UPDATE: DEPLOYMENT OF NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE (NZDF) AIR AND NAVAL ASSETS TO THE SOUTH CHINA SEA, SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2021

Update

- On 27 September the Minister of Defence provided oral advice to Cabinet on the deployment of New Zealand Defence Force ships (HMNZS AOTEAROA and HMNZS TE KAHA) and a P-3K2 Orion aircraft to South East Asia. Included in this advice was planned interaction of HMNZS AOTEAROA and the P-3K2 Orion with the United Kingdom Carrier Strike Group (UK CSG).
- Subsequent to this advice, HMNZS TE KAHA's introduction into service trials have been completed early, thus allowing the ship to interact with the UK CSG.
- HMNZS TE KAHA will now join the UK CSG in the South China Sea and transit in company with them south through the area. Although the exact timing is subject to change due to operational issues, the interaction is planned to occur from 1 to 7 October.
- At an appropriate point in the transit, HMNZS TE KAHA will detach from the UK CSG and proceed to Singapore to commence participation in the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) 50th Anniversary Exercise: Exercise Bersama Gold.
- New Zealand's interaction with the UK CSG in the South China Sea provides a valuable opportunity to work with key partners. It supports the rules based international order, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

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A/CDF

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14 December 2021

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Minister of Defence

For approval by 20 January 2022
For approval by 20 January 2022

Security cooperation in the Pacific: Aotearoa New Zealand's response to increasing strategic competition

BRIEFING Decision Submission

PURPOSE To seek approval of a set of principles to guide Aotearoa New Zealand's position on security cooperation in the Pacific.

Tukunga tūtohua – Recommended referrals

Prime Minister	For information by	20 January 2022
Minister for National Security and Intelligence	For information by	20 January 2022
Minister of Police	For information by	20 January 2022
Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs	For information by	20 January 2022

Taipitopito whakapā – Contact details

NAME	ROLE	DIVISION	WORK PHONE
Tharron McIvor s9(2)(a)	s9(2)(a)	Pacific Regional Division Ministry of Defence	s9(2)(a)

Mā te Tari Minita e whakakī – Minister's Office to complete

<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Noted	<input type="checkbox"/> Referred
<input type="checkbox"/> Needs amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Declined	<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn
<input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by events	<input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's notes	

Comments

Security cooperation in the Pacific: Aotearoa New Zealand's response to increasing strategic competition

Pito matua – Key points

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s6(a) Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, and traditional partners, including the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK) engage in security cooperation in the region. s6(a)

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– A Pacific country may make a sovereign decision regarding its security cooperation

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s6(a)

s6(a) may seek our endorsement of a programme of activity that we would not embark on ourselves, or they may undertake it in a manner which does not fit with the Pacific way.

- New Zealand's position on the actions of third countries may come under closer scrutiny or criticism.
- To navigate these challenges, we recommend that Aotearoa New Zealand adopt a set of principles to describe the forms of security cooperation that we support in the Pacific region. These principles could inform more proactive messaging when appropriate.
- Officials propose that these principles are:
 - Cooperation that supports a peaceful, stable, prosperous and resilient Pacific region, respecting the priorities of Pacific partners;
 - Co-investment that supports Pacific countries to exercise independence and agency in their own territories;
 - Capacity building efforts that are co-designed with Pacific partners, and contribute to their resilience over the long term;
 - Provision of security assistance through proper processes to put in place protections to prevent harm to communities; and
 - Engagement by partners that is consistent with our interests and values, undertaken transparently, and supports good governance.



Jonathan Kings
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Andrew Bridgman
Secretary of Defence

Security cooperation in the Pacific: Aotearoa New Zealand's response to increasing strategic competition

Tūtohu – Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

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- 3 **Note** that Aotearoa New Zealand is increasingly being asked to take a position on the security activity of others in the Pacific region, at times publicly. Yes / No
- 4 **Agree** to adopt the principles set out in this paper to guide New Zealand's approach to new security cooperation. Yes / No
- 5 **Note** that using these principles will enable Aotearoa New Zealand to affirm the importance of Pacific-led solutions, s6(a) Yes / No
- 6 **Note** that Ministers will be kept informed of key changes in Aotearoa New Zealand's security outlook in the Pacific. Yes / No
- 7 **Refer** a copy of this submission to the Prime Minister, Minister for National Security and Intelligence, Minister of Police, and Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs. Yes / No

Hon Nanaia Mahuta
Minister of Foreign Affairs / Minita Take Aorere

Date: / /



Hon Peeni Henare
Minister of Defence

Date: 19 / 01 / 2022

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Security cooperation in the Pacific: Aotearoa New Zealand's response to increasing strategic competition

Pūrongo – Report

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[redacted] China has increased its diplomatic, economic and military ties with Pacific countries, and expanded its security cooperation efforts (including in the area of policing).

2. Growing strategic competition in the Pacific spurred by China's increased military engagement and assertiveness in the region was a key finding of the recently delivered 2021 Defence Assessment approved by Cabinet on 1 November 2021.

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[redacted] the increased presence by other actors in the region means that we are operating in a more 'crowded' context. This competition challenges Aotearoa New Zealand's ability to maintain influence with Pacific partners.

3. This paper articulates the impacts that this trend is having on Aotearoa New Zealand and its security cooperation with Pacific countries. Broadly, these are:

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- Aotearoa New Zealand must now work harder to secure its trusted partner status with Pacific countries in a much more competitive environment.

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5. We propose that Aotearoa New Zealand agencies use a set of shared principles to guide policy positions on security cooperation in the Pacific. These principles reflect New Zealand's international identity, our interests and values, and will enable officials to engage clearly and proactively with all partners to articulate the kind of security cooperation that Aotearoa New Zealand does (and does not) support in the region.

6. The proposed principles can also be used by Aotearoa New Zealand agencies when considering new security cooperation activities with the Pacific, either delivered on our own, or in partnership with like-minded partners.

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Security cooperation in the Pacific: Aotearoa New Zealand's response to increasing strategic competition

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This is driving Aotearoa New Zealand's security agencies to review our approach to ensure that the support we offer remains valued and desirable to Pacific partners.

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9. **Australia** is the largest provider of security assistance to the Pacific region. Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand routinely cooperate to deliver security cooperation in the Pacific and have long engaged on our priorities and approach to the region. s6(a)

10. Due to the greater size of its defence budget, capabilities and policy settings, Australia is more able to respond in tangible ways s6(a), s6(b)(i)

11. Australia is strengthening its sovereign military capabilities and enhancing its interoperability with the **United States**, s6(a)

12. While the US has had an established military presence in the north Pacific for decades, s6(a)

Security cooperation in the Pacific: Aotearoa New Zealand's response to increasing strategic competition

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Aotearoa New Zealand also has sovereign interests in avoiding a permanent Chinese military presence being established in the Pacific.

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Despite differences in approach, however, the US ultimately shares our interest in a region comprised of Pacific countries that have independence and agency.

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17. Other partners have also sought our involvement or views on new forms of security cooperation. At the fifth **France**-Oceania Summit in July 2021, President Macron announced a new Pacific Coastguard Network and is actively seeking our participation. **Japan** held the first Japan Pacific Islands Defence Dialogue, inviting us to attend, and recently obtained formal observer status at the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting. A clear position by Aotearoa New Zealand on these, and other, new initiatives is important for our international relationships.

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Security cooperation in the Pacific: Aotearoa New Zealand's response to increasing strategic competition

A principles-based approach

18. Articulating our principles clearly and proactively will support Aotearoa New Zealand in influencing our partners. The Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade have led an inter-agency process to develop the following principles, drawing on the types of security cooperation that Aotearoa New Zealand has supported in the past:
- Cooperation that supports a peaceful, stable, prosperous and resilient Pacific region, respecting the priorities of Pacific partners;
 - Co-investment that allows Pacific countries to exercise independence and agency in their own territories;
 - Capacity building efforts that are co-designed with Pacific partners, and contribute to resilience over the long term;
 - Provision of security assistance through proper processes to put in place protections to prevent harm to communities; and
 - Engagement by partners that is consistent with our interests and values.

Principles inform a consistent position in a range of situations

19. Agreed principles can provide a reference point for Aotearoa New Zealand to articulate its position on a range of security and military activities, and identify how these activities either support, or cut across, Aotearoa New Zealand's own interests.
20. Being transparent and consistent ensures that Aotearoa New Zealand retains its reputation as an independent, principled, predictable and responsible actor. Proactively sharing our principles-based approach s6(a)
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21. Articulating the rationale behind Aotearoa New Zealand's position on security cooperation publically, with reference to these principles, would enable reaffirmation of the importance of Pacific-led solutions. s6(a)
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Consultation

22. This advice has been developed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Ministry of Defence with input from agencies within the Pacific Geostrategic and Security Governance Group, including the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Ministry for Primary Industries, National Assessments Bureau, Government Communications Security Bureau, New Zealand Defence Force, and New Zealand Police.

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NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE

SUBMISSION TO MINISTER COVER SHEET¹

Title	NOTE TO MINISTER: UPDATE ON NZDF INITIAL RESPONSE TO TONGA VOLCANIC ERUPTION AND TSUNAMI				
Tracking No	NZDF Tracking #2022-008 <i>(for OCDF use only)</i>		Minister's Tracking # <i>(for Minister's office)</i>		
Importance of the Issue²	High	Moderate	X	Routine	
Urgency for Attention/Sign-off	Moderate		Request ministerial response by: <i>Not required</i>		
Contacts	LTCOL s. 9(2)(g)(i)		Tel: s. 9(2)(a)		A/H: s. 9(2)(a)
			Tel:		A/H:
Purpose	This note is to inform you of New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) initial support to Tonga after the recent volcanic eruption and subsequent tsunami.				
Recommendations	<p>It is recommended that you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Note the NZDF is providing support to MFAT-led assistance efforts in response to the volcanic eruption and tsunami in Tonga under the guise of OPERATION PACIFIC RELIEF – TONGA. b. Note that support consists of: transporting supplies and equipment, surveying maritime approaches and wharves, aerial reconnaissance, and water supply. c. Note that due to Tonga's COVID 19 protocols, response efforts have centred on contactless assistance. The NZDF is prepared to provide land-based assistance if protocols are changed by Tonga. d. Note that this submission details the NZDF's initial humanitarian assistance and disaster response to the Tongan eruption and tsunami. Should requirements for longer term support arise then I will advise you of options to assist whilst continuing to meet NZDF's existing outputs. 				
MoD/NZDF Consultation³	MoD Consulted				
Minister's Comments					
Minister's Action	Signed/Noted/Agreed/Approved/Declined/Discussion required				
	Referred to:				
Minister's Signature				Date:	


 KR SHORT XO OCDF
 Air Marshal
 Chief of Defence Force
 20 January 2022

¹ To accompany documents to the Minister of Defence.
² Select appropriate level of importance.
³ Sheet not to exceed one page. Shaded areas to be completed.



Headquarters NZDF
Freyberg Building
Private Bag 39997
Wellington 5045
NEW ZEALAND

20 January 2022

Minister of Defence

UPDATE ON NZDF INITIAL RESPONSE TO TONGA VOLCANIC ERUPTION AND TSUNAMI

Purpose

1. This note is to inform you of New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) initial support to Tonga after the recent volcanic eruption and subsequent tsunami.

Background

2. On 15 January 2022, a significant eruption from Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha-apai underwater volcano occurred and generated a tsunami that impacted Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu and parts of the coast lines of a number of nations around the wider Pacific. The volcanic eruption also resulted in significant ash fall across Tonga. These events have disrupted power, communications networks, shipping and aviation in Tonga, and created water and food shortages.

NZDF support to Tonga

3. The NZDF is providing support to MFAT-led assistance efforts, as follows, under the guise of OPERATION PACIFIC RELIEF – TONGA:

- a. 17 & 19 January – A P-3K2 aircraft flew two reconnaissance flights. The imagery and assessments have informed Tonga's recovery efforts. The second flight included Fiji's Lau Island group, and imagery was shared with the Fijian Government.
- b. 20 January – A C-130H aircraft delivered relief supplies to Fua'amoto Airport, Tongatapu. The next flight is planned for 22 January before the aircraft is redeployed for operations to Antarctica.
- c. 20 January – HMNZS WELLINGTON will arrive at Nuku'alofa in the early evening. The ship will conduct a dive and hydrographic survey of Vuna Wharf and approaches followed by other wharves prioritised by the Government of Tonga. An embarked Seasprite helicopter will conduct aerial reconnaissance and will be available to deliver relief supplies.
- d. 21 January – HMNZS AOTEAROA (ROA) will arrive at Nuku'alofa at approximately midday. The ship will provide drinking water, fuel and seven shipping containers of supplies. The ship has a COVID PCR test facility. ROA must depart Tonga on 24 January in order to complete scheduled Antarctica resupply of US and NZ bases.
- e. 21/22 January – HMNZS CANTERBURY (CAN) will be ready to deploy, after a period at sea testing and proving capabilities, whilst vehicles, equipment, and supplies for embarkation are consolidated at Devonport Naval Base. If a request to deploy the ship is received, the transit to Tonga will take 3 days. Two NH-90 Helicopters, an Army Engineering unit complete with heavy engineer equipment, and a command

element for the deployed NZDF forces will be embarked. The ship is also capable supplying water.

4. NZDF offers of support have been accepted by the Government of Tonga and formalised through two tasking notes from MFAT along with Government of Tonga diplomatic clearances.
5. Relief operations are funded from within baseline. MFAT is funding the provision of relief supplies and equipment.
6. Tonga's COVID border settings require significant periods of isolation which prohibits timely land-based assistance. As a result, the response has centred on contactless assistance. New Zealand and Australia have submitted protocols for the conduct of land-based operations designed to prevent COVID transmission, which may provide sufficient comfort for Tonga to permit land-based assistance. This would be delivered primarily through landing personnel and their equipment and supplies from CAN and could be supplemented by further flights from New Zealand.

Other partners' military response

7. NZDF and the Australian Defence Force (ADF) are cooperating closely to ensure response efforts are complimentary. Advice and coordination assistance is being provided to partner militaries wishing to assist Tonga. To date this has included the US, UK, France (including Pacific territories), Japan, Fiji, Malaysia, India and Thailand.

s. 6(b)(i)



Future intent

12. The above details the NZDF's initial humanitarian assistance and disaster relief response. Should requirements for longer term support arise then I will advise you of options to assist whilst continuing to meet NZDF's existing outputs.

Recommendations

13. It is recommended that the Minister:
 - a. **Note** the NZDF is providing support to MFAT-led assistance efforts in response to the volcanic eruption and tsunami in Tonga under the guise of OPERATION PACIFIC RELIEF – TONGA.
 - b. **Note** that support consists of: transporting supplies and equipment, surveying maritime approaches and wharves, aerial reconnaissance, and water supply.
 - c. **Note** that due to Tonga's COVID 19 protocols, response efforts have centred on contactless assistance. The NZDF is prepared to provide land-based assistance if protocols are changed by Tonga.

- d. **Note that this submission details the NZDF's initial humanitarian assistance and disaster response to the Tongan eruption and tsunami. Should requirements for longer term support arise then I will advise you of options to assist whilst continuing to meet NZDF's existing outputs.**

K. E. Woodhead
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Air Marshal
Chief of Defence Force