



## Office of Hon Mark Mitchell

MP for Rodney  
Minister of Defence  
Minister for Land Information

Associate Minister of Justice

Andrew Riddell  
[fyi-request-6162-494a60ab@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-6162-494a60ab@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Mr Riddell

Thank you for your email of 8 July 2017, in which you made the following request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- *Please provide copies of all briefings you have received that lead to Te Kaha recently being assigned to a United States of America carrier group as reported in a recent press release in your name.*
- *Please include the documentation you have on the purpose and scope for the assignment, the assessed risks, and the terms of engagement that apply.*

On 7 August I extended the timeframe for responding to your request to 23 August, in order to complete consultations on the release of this material.

I am enclosing one document that falls within the scope of your request:

*Possible Extension of the Deployment of HMNZS Te Kaha to Support the United States Navy*

Some portions of the document have been withheld in order to protect:

- the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand (section 6(a) of the Act); and
- 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) of the Act).

The relevant sections of the Act under which the information has been withheld have been noted in the margins of the document. I have also removed the names of junior officials.

Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to request the Ombudsman to investigate and review this response.

Yours sincerely



Hon Mark Mitchell  
**Minister of Defence**

25 AUG 2017

**Encl.**      *Possible Extension of the Deployment of HMNZS Te Kaha to Support the United States Navy*

S 21/6



Submission to the Minister of Defence  
**EXTENSION OF THE DEPLOYMENT OF HMNZS TE KAHA TO THE UNITED STATES NAVY**

MoD ref: 071/17 NZDF tracking: 189/17.

Type of submission:	Submission	For action by:	Urgent
Purpose:	To advise you on our proposal to offer the Royal New Zealand Navy ship HMNZS Te Kaha to support United States Navy fleet operations for approximately three weeks following the accident involving the USS Fitzgerald.		
Cost:	The New Zealand Defence Force would absorb any marginal cost incurred from the re-tasking.		

**Recommended actions:**

- a. **Note** there is an opportunity to re-task a Royal New Zealand Navy ship to provide support to the United States Navy; Yes/No
- b. **Note** the proposed re-tasking of HMNZS *Te Kaha* would contribute to New Zealand's broader interests of strengthening the bilateral relationship with the United States; Yes/No
- c. **Note** that while the Seventh Fleet would task the ship, caveats would be included to ensure tasking remains consistent with New Zealand government policy; Yes/No
- d. **Note** that we would develop these national caveats in consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Yes/No
- e. **Agree** that the Royal New Zealand Navy offer HMNZS *Te Kaha* to the United States Navy; and Yes/No
- f. **Refer** this note to the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister for information. Yes/No

for MINISTER OF DEFENCE  
Date: 17 June 2017.

T.J. KEATING  
Lieutenant General  
Chief of Defence Force  
Date: 20/6/17

HELENE QUILTER  
Secretary of Defence  
Date: 20.6.17

NZDF contact:		Ph:		A/H:	
MOD contact:	Charlotte Beaglehole	Ph:		A/H:	
Agencies involved:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade				

Released under the Official Information Act 1982



Secretary of Defence  
Ministry of Defence

## OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVES

Freyberg House, Wellington, New Zealand



Chief of Defence Force  
New Zealand Defence  
Force

20 June 2017

Acting Minister of Defence

### POSSIBLE EXTENSION OF THE DEPLOYMENT OF HMNZS TE KAHA TO SUPPORT THE UNITED STATES NAVY

#### Purpose

To seek your agreement that the New Zealand Defence Force offer *HMNZS Te Kaha* to support United States Navy fleet operations for approximately three weeks following the accident involving the *USS Fitzgerald*.

#### Background

2. On 17 June the *USS Fitzgerald*, which is assigned to the United States Navy Seventh Fleet headquartered in Yokosuka, Japan, collided with a Philippine-flagged container ship. The *USS Fitzgerald* is a Guided Missile Destroyer i.e. a warship with advanced combat capabilities.

3. The collision occurred approximately 56 nautical miles southwest of Yokosuka. The starboard side of the *USS Fitzgerald* was seriously damaged and destroyer's hull was penetrated below the waterline, flooding machinery space, the radio room, and two berthing spaces. The captain's cabin was also crushed. Seven crewmen were reported missing after the collision, and their bodies were found the next day after rescue workers gained access to flooded compartments.

4. The Seventh Fleet is part of the broader United States Pacific Fleet and the largest of the United States Navy's forward-deployed fleets. It is headquartered in Japan and commands United States naval forces in Asia. The Fleet promotes regional stability and engagement and would be involved, if required, in the defence of South Korea or would lead the United States response to a natural disaster in the region.

#### Proposal

5. *HMNZS Te Kaha* is currently undertaking a routine deployment in Asia. She is now in Japan and is scheduled to return to New Zealand via Australia. There is an opportunity for New Zealand to offer *HMNZS Te Kaha* to be used by the United States to support Seventh Fleet operations for a period of approximately 3 weeks. This would provide some cover for Seventh Fleet while the *USS Fitzgerald* is being replaced.

## Comment

6. While *HMNZS Te Kaha* does not have the full range of capabilities of the *USS Fitzgerald* it could conduct some roles carried out by the destroyer, or enable the Seventh Fleet to free up other United States Navy ships to backfill roles undertaken by the *USS Fitzgerald* roles.

7.

section 6(a)

In addition, it would extend New Zealand's presence and engagement in the region and allow *HMNZS Te Kaha* to continue to undertake routine naval interactions and training with other countries' naval assets. These could be conducted throughout the Seventh Fleet area of operations, which are shown in the map in Annex A, although the specific areas to which the *HMNZS Te Kaha* would be deployed would be subject to national caveats.

8. The New Zealand Defence Force would maintain full command of *HMNZS Te Kaha*, however Seventh Fleet Command would task the ship. National caveats would be established to ensure the *HMNZS Te Kaha* operates in accordance with New Zealand Government policy.

section 6(a)

9. In making the offer we would seek to identify United States expectations on what tasking they would anticipate, so as to assess whether it raised any of the areas of sensitivity identified above. It would be important that the United States understood that confirmation of the offer would be subject to our satisfaction that the tasking aligned with the New Zealand Government's preferences. Should the offer be accepted, national caveats would be developed in consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade before being provided to you.

10. Initial indications are that the United States would welcome the offer, and that there is a high likelihood that section 9(2)(g)(i) they would accept it.

### *Re-tasking objectives*

11. If New Zealand's offer is accepted, the re-tasking would contribute to New Zealand's objectives through:

- positive bilateral engagement with the United States; and
- making a tangible commitment to the maintenance of peace and security in the Asia-Pacific, of which New Zealand is a direct beneficiary.

### *Implications for scheduled tasking*

12. *HMNZS Te Kaha* is due to depart Tokyo on 23 June and participate in the naval warfare component of the Australian Exercise Talisman Sabre, over the period 25 June to 10 August. If New Zealand's offer was accepted, *HMNZS Te Kaha* would not be able to participate in Exercise Talisman Sabre. The ship is not a critical component to the exercise and even without her participation, the New Zealand Defence Force would still make a significant contribution to the broader exercise, including through the deployment of more 700 personnel and the *HMNZS Canterbury*.

#### *Cost*

13. The New Zealand Defence Force would absorb any marginal cost incurred from the re-tasking.

#### *Publicity*

14. If New Zealand's offer was accepted, a media statement could be released that expresses condolences for the loss of life from the *USS Fitzgerald's* collision. The statement could also note that the *HMNZS Te Kaha* would remain in the region for a period of three weeks working with the Seventh Fleet. This would ensure we maintain transparency with our regional partners.

15. Given the current international attention on the Korean Peninsula and the continued maritime disputes in the East and South China Seas, it is possible that New Zealand's offer may attract media attention. Media points would be provided.

#### *Consultation*

16. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has seen and support this proposal subject to any deployment supporting our wider foreign policy interests in the region. Officials would provide advice on national caveats for Ministers. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet have been advised. Minister Mitchell has been advised of this proposal and is happy with the approach proposed

#### *Next steps*

17. Further advice will be provided to your office as planning progresses, including on the proposed passage, tasking and risk mitigation strategies.

18. We also recommend that this advice is referred to the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister for information.

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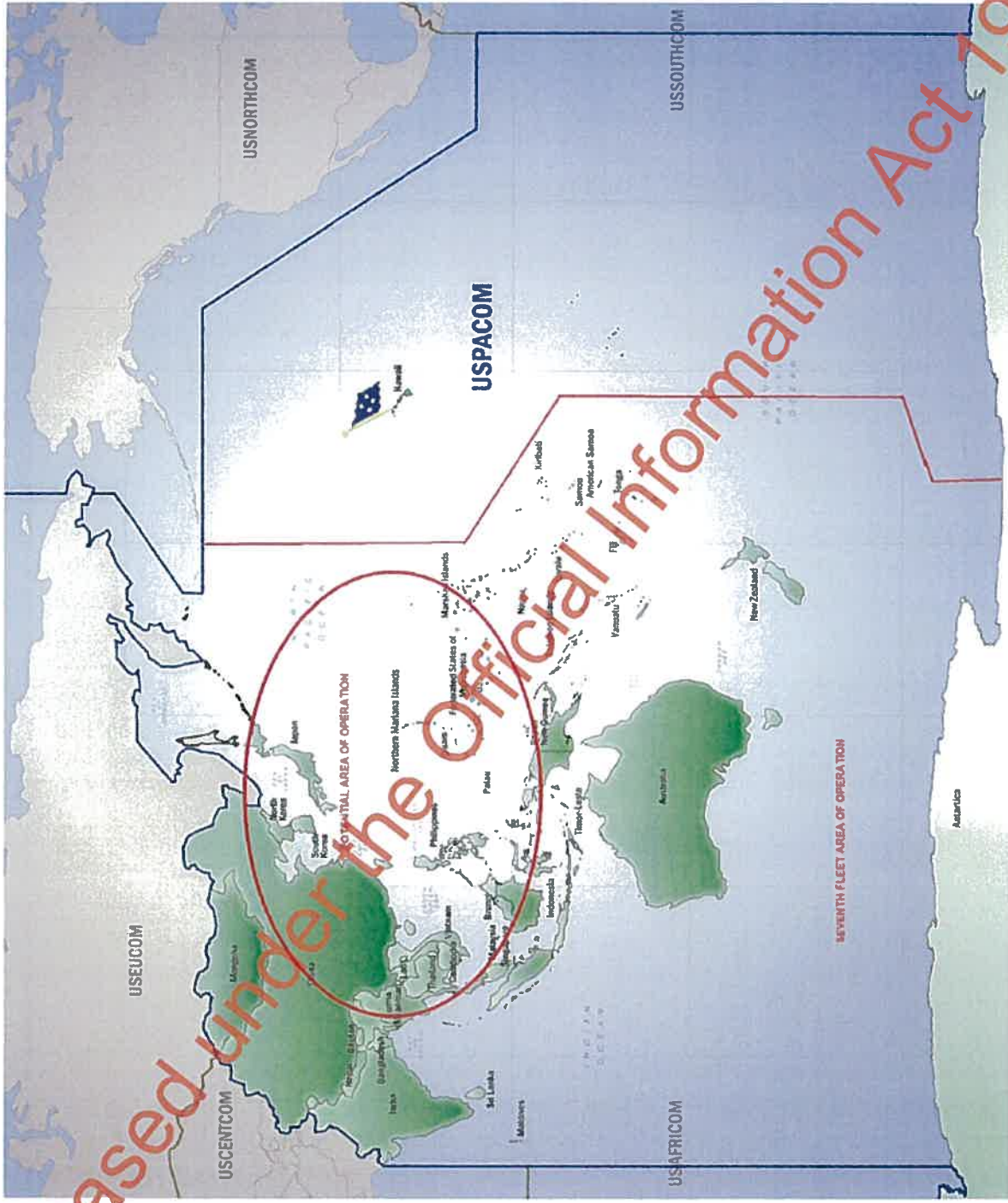
## Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

- a. **Note** there is an opportunity to re-task a Royal New Zealand Navy ship to provide support to the United States Navy;
- b. **Note** the proposed re-tasking of *HMNZS Te Kaha* would contribute to New Zealand's broader interests of strengthening the bilateral relationship with the United States;
- c. **Note** that while the Seventh Fleet would task the ship, caveats would be included to ensure tasking remains consistent with New Zealand government policy;
- d. **Note** that we would develop these national caveats in consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade;
- e. **Agree** that the Royal New Zealand Navy offer *HMNZS Te Kaha* to the United States Navy; and
- f. **Refer** this note to the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister for information.

 **T. J. KEATING**  
Lieutenant General  
Chief of Defence Force

**HELENE QUILTER**  
Secretary of Defence



Released under the Official Information Act 1982



## HEYWOOD CHELSEA, MS

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**From:** Richard Deihl <Richard.Deihl@parliament.govt.nz>  
**Sent:** Monday, 10 July 2017 10:39 a.m.  
**To:** Ministerial Services; MACGREGOR ADRIAN, MR; HEYWOOD CHELSEA, MS  
**Cc:** HOEY CHRISTOPHER, MR; SPEEDY CHARLOTTE, MS; Peter Carter  
**Subject:** Official Information request - Te Kaha mission - OIA 54 Riddell

Please find below an OIA request. 20 days from today for response.

-----Original Message-----

From: Caroline Armstrong  
Sent: Monday, 10 July 2017 8:38 a.m.  
To: Elliot Isaacs  
Subject: FW: Official Information request - Te Kaha mission

Hi Elliot,

Please see below - I think it was sent to us by accident so forwarding on for your information.

Thank you :-)

Kind Regards,

Caroline Armstrong  
Ministerial Secretary  
Hon Gerry Brownlee  
Minister of Foreign Affairs; Responsible for the Earthquake Commission Parliament Buildings, Private Bag 18041,  
Wellington, 6160

-----Original Message-----

From: Andrew Riddell [<mailto:fyi-request-6162-494a60ab@requests.fyi.org.nz>]  
Sent: Saturday, 8 July 2017 2:12 p.m.  
To: G Brownlee (MIN)  
Subject: Official Information request - Te Kaha mission

Dear Minister of Defence Mark Mitchell,

Please provide copies of all briefings you have received that lead to Te Kaha recently being assigned to a United States of America carrier group as reported in a recent press release in your name.

Please include the documentation you have on the purpose and scope for the assignment, the assessed risks, and the terms of engagement that apply.

I am a New Zealand citizen resident in New Zealand.

Yours faithfully,

Andrew Riddell

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This is an Official Information request made via the FYI website.

Please use this email address for all replies to this request:

[fyi-request-6162-494a60ab@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-6162-494a60ab@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Is [g.brownlee@ministers.govt.nz](mailto:g.brownlee@ministers.govt.nz) the wrong address for Official Information requests to Minister of Defence? If so, please contact us using this form:

[https://fyi.org.nz/change\\_request/new?body=minister\\_of\\_defence](https://fyi.org.nz/change_request/new?body=minister_of_defence)

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If you find this service useful as an Official Information officer, please ask your web manager to link to us from your organisation's OIA or LGOIMA page.

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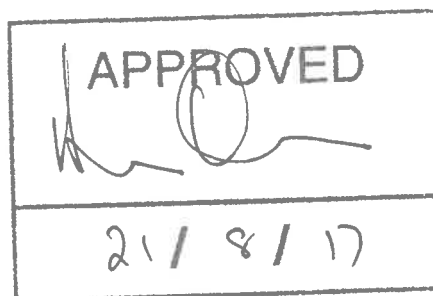
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Yours sincerely



Hon Mark Mitchell  
**Minister of Defence**

**Encl.**      *Possible Extension of the Deployment of HMNZS Te Kaha to Support the United States Navy*