

# Defence Policy

## Enhancing and Ensuring Our Regional Security

There is now broad recognition that defence policy should reflect New Zealand's independent assessment of its security environment. This consensus has emerged as a result of contemporary foreign policy and defence challenges.

National agrees with this consensus and recognises that, firstly, New Zealand has to help build security within the South Pacific and, secondly, New Zealand relies on an open and secure world where trade and commerce flows freely.

Our defence policy aims to maximise the effectiveness of our defence forces, make sure that they can work well with our international partners when they are called on to do so, and ensure they have the capability to meet the demands they will face over the coming decades.

### Note:

For background to this policy, see our discussion paper on [Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade](#).

## MAXIMISING EFFECTIVENESS

The contemporary security environment directly shapes our Defence Force. It must have a sufficient range of capabilities to deal with any reasonable foreseeable contingency within our region and to build security within the South Pacific. Given the large size of the region, and the remoteness from other countries and land masses, there is a need for forces that are agile and can operate over long distances at very short notice.

Outside our region, we are best suited to providing high-quality contributions that are internationally valued and respected. Inevitably these will be focused and specific.

National will:

- Ensure the Defence Force can build security within the South Pacific.
- Emphasise a requirement for agile forces, deployable at long range with relatively short notice.
- Ensure that, when our forces are deployed outside our region, they are focused on specific and specialist capabilities that reflect our defence expertise.

## WORKING WITH OUR PARTNERS

New Zealand invariably works alongside other countries. Most frequently it works in partnership with Australia. This means our forces should be interoperable with Australia's, and should have a high level of compatibility of equipment, training, and doctrine. Both countries also have a mutual interest in deterring unwelcome intrusions within the region and protecting trade routes. It is essential that New Zealand has a reasonable level of military capabilities to achieve the full range of defence and civil tasks within our region.

Outside our region, New Zealand can be expected to provide only specific and specialist contributions. Almost without exception, our forces will form part of a much larger multilateral force that has the full range of capabilities required for the task. To ensure we can make appropriate contributions, we need a sufficient range of capabilities – both combat and peacekeeping – that can be deployed as part of a multilateral force.

### National will:

- Ensure our forces are interoperable with Australia's, including a high level of compatibility of equipment, training, and doctrine.
- Recognise the importance of working with other international partners in the defence arena.

## REVIEWING CAPABILITY REQUIREMENTS

The Defence Force has been grappling with several major issues in recent years.

It has been heavily committed on deployments, and special attention needs to be given to recruiting and retention to ensure it can meet the tasks we ask it to do. Careful analysis is required of the military hardware that will be needed over coming years, and some imagination will be necessary in order to stretch our capabilities to meet the wide variety of contemporary defence tasks.

Some of the major assets that are vital to achieving New Zealand's defence objectives will reach the end of their economic life toward the close of the next decade, such as the C-130 Hercules aircraft. The Defence Long-Term Development Plan, initiated in 2002 and regularly reviewed, covers the period to 2015. We need to carefully examine the Defence Force's capability requirements when major assets approach the end of their lives.

Given the recent substantial budgetary blow-outs on major capital purchases, we need to analyse the quality of defence procurement and budgetary procedures within the Ministry of Defence and the Defence Force.

National believes a Defence White Paper is necessary to provide a fresh look at these and other issues surrounding the personnel and capability requirements of our Defence Force.

This White Paper will primarily focus on providing recommendations on the most appropriate defence capabilities required to meet New Zealand's security interests.

The White Paper process will ensure that defence planning is transparent, robust, and the subject of

genuine public consultation. The parts of the review concerned with defence procurement and budgetary processes will be assisted by an independent consultant.

National believes the Defence White Paper will help ensure our forces have the right balance for the foreign policy and security requirements of the next decade, and will help consolidate the defence consensus that has now emerged.

National will:

- Publish a White Paper in its first year in government to provide a fresh look at the capability requirements that shape our Defence Force.
- Place a particular focus on addressing recruitment and retention issues in our defence forces.
- Engage an independent consultant to analyse the quality of procurement and budgetary procedures within the Ministry of Defence and the Defence Force.