

Proactive Release

Published on or before: 30/09/2024

The following Cabinet papers and related Cabinet minutes have been proactively released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Title	Reference
<i>Cabinet Minute of Decision – Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters – 25 to 27 July 2024</i>	CAB-24-MIN-0319
<i>Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters – July 2024</i>	

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- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government.



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters – 25 to 27 July 2024

Portfolio **Foreign Affairs**

On 26 August 2024, Cabinet **noted** the report from the Rt Hon Winston Peters under CAB-24-SUB-0319 on his travel, from 25 to 27 July 2024, to Vientiane, Lao PDR to attend a series of ASEAN Foreign Minister-led meetings and bilateral meetings.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

Proactively released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

~~Restricted~~

Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters – July 2024

- 1 I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Vientiane, Lao PDR to represent New Zealand at the annual series of ASEAN Foreign Minister-led meetings from 25 to 27 July.
- 2 These engagements included an ASEAN-New Zealand Ministerial Meeting (known as the PMC+1), the East Asia Summit (EAS) Foreign Ministers' Meeting and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).
- 3 The PMC+1 meeting which we co-chaired with Brunei traversed the breadth of cooperation between New Zealand and ASEAN. We reiterated our intention to seek Comprehensive Strategic Partner (CSP) status s6(a) to acknowledge the 50th anniversary of NZ - ASEAN relations. ASEAN Members spoke positively but not definitively about New Zealand's aspirations for CSP status.
- 4 Ministerial counterparts also reflected at the PMC+1 meeting on the progress made in implementing the ASEAN - New Zealand Plan of Action 2021-2025. The upgrade of AANZFTA and near conclusion of an Air Services Agreement, as well as opportunities for enhanced cooperation in areas such as the green and digital economy were also discussed. People to people exchanges, including scholarships, English Language Training for Officials and the Young Diplomats' Study tours received high praise.
- 5 The EAS and ARF meetings focused on the most pressing geopolitical and security issues facing the region. Interventions from Ministerial colleagues acknowledged that the strategic context in the Indo-Pacific has deteriorated - but there was no alignment on either the causes or solutions, s6(a)
- 6 s6(a)
- 7 In our interventions, we emphasised the importance of regional architecture and outlined New Zealand's position on the core issues affecting the rules-

based order, including the South China Sea, North Korea, Israel/Gaza, Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine and the crisis in Myanmar.

8 Alongside the formal plenary meetings, we conducted a series of bilateral engagements - reconnecting with old friends such as Ministers Balakrishnan and Erywan, and meeting new counterparts like Foreign Secretary Lammy and Minister Maris. Our bilateral programme included meetings with:

- Brunei Darussalam: Foreign Minister Erywan
- Cambodia: Foreign Minister Sok
- ASEAN Secretary General Kim Hourn
- Philippines: Foreign Minister Manalo
- Lao PDR: Foreign Minister Kommasith
- Singapore: Foreign Minister Balakrishnan
- India: Foreign Minister Jaishankar
- Norway: Foreign Minister Eide
- United Kingdom: Foreign Secretary Lammy
- Canada: Foreign Minister Joly

9 We also met briefly with Thai Foreign Minister Maris, Indonesian Foreign Minister Marsudi, and had conversations with US Secretary of State Blinken, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Australian Foreign Minister Wong, Korean Foreign Minister Cho, EU High Representative Borrell, and Malaysian Foreign Minister Hasan.

10 We reinforced to ASEAN counterparts, and to Indian Foreign Minister Jaishankar, our Government's ambition to bring new energy to our engagement with the region and our aspiration to establish a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with ASEAN.

11 While in Lao PDR we also hosted an engagement for alumni of New Zealand's Manaaki scholarship programme and launched an International Development Cooperation activity that will strengthen the resilience of some of Vientiane's most vulnerable flood prone urban communities.

12 Through these engagements, we were able to deliver on our trip objectives which were to:

- advocate for New Zealand to become a Comprehensive Strategic Partner with ASEAN in 2025 s6(a)
- reassert New Zealand's profile and influence in an environment s6(a), and underscore New Zealand as an enduring, serious contributor to the regional architecture; and

- register New Zealand's positions on the core issues affecting the rules-based order and strategic environment in our region. This included articulating the Government's foreign policy reset and New Zealand's desire for an Indo-Pacific order underpinned by principles, rules and norms.

13 The next opportunity to make our case for New Zealand to become a Comprehensive Strategic Partner of ASEAN will be at the 19th East Asia Summit on 11 October in Vientiane. The Prime Minister is scheduled to lead New Zealand's delegation to this engagement.

Proactive Release

14 This paper will be proactively released as per Cabinet Office Circular CO (18) 4 on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's website. The paper will be subject to redaction as appropriate on the grounds set out under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendation

1 I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Rt. Hon Winston Peters

Minister of Foreign Affairs