

Proactive Release

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The following Cabinet paper has been proactively released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Title	Reference
<i>Cabinet Minute of Decision</i>	CAB-24-MIN-0501
<i>Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters – 23 November - 1 December 2024</i>	

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Key to redaction codes:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government;
- 6(b)(i): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis;



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters - November 2024

Portfolio **Foreign Affairs**

On 16 December 2024, Cabinet **noted** the report from the Rt Hon Winston Peters under CAB-24-SUB-0501 on his travel, from 23 November to 1 December 2024, to France, Germany, and the United Kingdom for bilateral engagements.

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 – 23 November - 1 December 2024

- 1 This paper recommends that Cabinet note this report on travel to France, Germany and the United Kingdom (UK) from Saturday 23 November to Sunday 1 December 2024 (inclusive).

Report

- 2 The purpose of the travel was to deepen relationships with three traditional partners that are critical to New Zealand. We built and strengthened relationships with key ministerial counterparts and political contacts; sought to shape the strategic and tactical engagement of France, Germany and the UK in the Indo-Pacific region, where we share deep interests; reinforced and demonstrated New Zealand's status as a knowledgeable, effective, reliable, and constructive partner on geostrategic and security issues; raised awareness of New Zealand's foreign policy priorities and responses to an increasingly complex and contested world; and exchanged views on flash points with global implications, including Ukraine, the Middle East and DPRK.

Paris

- 3 The travel to Paris from 24-27 November was our first official visit to France since taking office in 2023 and since the French parliamentary elections in June. The visit enabled engagement with key counterparts including Foreign Minister, Jean-Noël Barrot, and Overseas Territories Minister, François-Noël Buffet, who had recently visited New Caledonia. These two ministers are now serving in a caretaker government pending the appointment of a new Prime Minister following a vote of no confidence on 4 December. We also met with President Macron's Special Envoy for Lebanon (and former Foreign and Defence Minister), Jean-Yves Le Drian, President Macron's Diplomatic Adviser, Emmanuel Bonne, as well as the Senate's cross-party New Zealand-France Friendship Group – all of whom remain in their roles. We also delivered a foreign policy speech at eminent think-tank Institut Français de Relations Internationales (IFRI).
- 4 Europe's second largest economy, France is a driving force behind more active EU engagement in the Indo-Pacific and has an enduring and common interest in the stability, sustainability, and prosperity of the Pacific region. The visit to Paris enabled New Zealand to affirm its role as a likeminded and valuable partner in the Indo-Pacific, and especially for France in the Pacific. s6(a)

there is appetite to strengthen

collaboration across a range of areas, including in the Pacific and on Antarctic issues. The meeting with the Special Envoy for Lebanon, Jean-Yves Le Drian, allowed for a well-timed update on diplomatic efforts to reach a ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

- 5 There was cross-party alignment on issues of interest to New Zealand, including a strong commitment to provide reconstruction assistance to New Caledonia and progress talks on its political future. s6(a), s6(b)(i)

Berlin

- 6 The visit to Germany from 27-28 November was the first by a New Zealand Foreign Minister to Berlin in seven years. It reciprocated German Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs Annalena Baerbock's visit to New Zealand in May. With early elections in Germany now to take place in February 2025, the programme included connecting with a range of foreign affairs-related political figures across the political spectrum, to gain their insights and build awareness and visibility of New Zealand's interests and perspectives. Alongside a meeting with Foreign Minister Baerbock, this included meeting Chancellor Scholz's Foreign and Security Policy Adviser, Jens Plötner; opposition Members of Parliament (MPs) - including from the CDU/CSU party s6(a)
 - and a broader cross-party set of foreign policy-oriented MPs.
- 7 The visit provided an opportunity to deepen conversations with the world's third largest economy, our largest trading partner in Europe, and Europe's largest and most influential power on a range of foreign policy files, particularly Indo-Pacific and Pacific issues, Ukraine, and the Middle East. s6(a)

In the meeting with Baerbock, we indicated New Zealand's support for the German-initiated CEDAW Afghanistan initiative; invited Baerbock to visit Antarctica, s6(a)

German interlocutors expressed appreciation for New Zealand's commitment to supporting Ukraine.

- 8 Discussions on the Indo-Pacific and Pacific affirmed New Zealand's role as a knowledgeable partner on geo-strategic issues and reinforced the importance of an enduring German presence in the region. Germany's commitment to its Indo-Pacific presence continues to be bipartisan and its likeminded and enhanced engagement in the Pacific make it an important partner in the region. s6(b)(i)

London

- 9 The centrepiece of the visit to the from UK 28-29 November was the inaugural annual New Zealand-UK Foreign Ministers' Dialogue with Foreign Secretary David Lammy. We confirmed that the Foreign Ministers' Dialogue should be an annual meeting. The Foreign Ministers' Dialogue confirmed the closeness of the bilateral relationship and identified several areas for further cooperation, including in the Pacific.
- 10 Other meetings included those with the Cabinet Office Minister with responsibility for national security and resilience, Rt Hon Pat McFadden, Shadow Foreign Secretary, Dame Priti Patel, and a discussion with cross-party MPs to hear a range of views on the UK's foreign policy and domestic priorities.
- 11 Our engagements were opportunities to: advance the bilateral relationship and put New Zealand's perspectives on the new UK government's radar; share advice and coordinate activities in the Pacific post-CHOGM; reinforce the interlinkages between our security interests in the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific; and exchange views on global issues of mutual interest and concern.
- 12 Working closely on defence and security issues was a key theme of the visit, with all interlocutors keen to do more. s6(a), s6(b)(i)

The UK confirmed its commitment to the Pacific and will consider what further support it can provide. We signed a refreshed NZ-UK Joint Statement on Antarctic Cooperation, committing to enhanced environmental and science cooperation. s6(b)(i)

Proactive release

This Cabinet paper would be proactively released as per Cabinet Office Circular CO(18) 4, on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's website. Proactive release is subject to redaction as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Rt Hon Winston Peters

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs