

Oral Item: Russia/Ukraine conflict: Options for Aotearoa New Zealand assistance

The Minister of Foreign Affairs will have an opportunity to discuss options for further Aotearoa New Zealand assistance to Ukraine with Cabinet colleagues. The Minister may wish to:

- Raise the requests received from Ukraine for Aotearoa New Zealand support to assist in their self-defence;
- Seek agreement either to:
 - o Approve NZ \$5 million of Vote Foreign Affairs and Trade funding to non-lethal assistance via the NATO Trust Fund for Ukraine's self-defence (MFAT's preferred option); or
 - o Approve all or part of the NZ\$ 5 million funding to procure New Zealand goods for dispatch to Ukrain ^{s6(a)}

- s6(a)

- The Minister of Foreign Affairs will also (see separate Aide Memoire) update Cabinet on the work currently underway in relation to Aotearoa New Zealand's new Russia sanctions regime.

Assistance to Ukraine

- The military situation in Ukraine remains fluid, which makes predicting future outcomes or end-game scenarios difficult. Ukraine has managed to stall or slow Russia's military advance in many areas. Support from foreign partners has been a critical enabler in Ukraine's self defence; and will continue to be critical.

• s6(a)

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- Ukraine has asked Aotearoa New Zealand for support to aid in its self-defence through direct requests for equipment and through general pleas to the international community via NATO (disseminated on a regular basis to NATO and partners including New Zealand). NATO and EU countries, as well as Australia, Japan and Korea, are providing lethal and non-lethal aid to Ukrainian Armed Forces (see annex).

• s6(a)

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- Given the urgency of its needs ^{s6(b)(i), s6(a)} the most practical and useful assistance to the Ukraine Armed Forces, any support for Ukraine's self-defence would ideally be targeted in a manner that allowed for timely delivery of assistance that meets identified needs.

Rationale for Aotearoa New Zealand to provide support to Ukraine's self defence

- Given the unprecedented nature of the global security threat posed by Russia and its destabilising actions, including to Aotearoa New Zealand's own security and broader interests, a contribution to support Ukraine's self-defence would represent a tangible demonstration of our commitment to the protection of that country's sovereignty.
- This would build on the NZ \$6 million humanitarian contribution already provided.
- ^{s9(2)(g)(i)}

s6(a)

Ukraine's military needs are immediate and extensive and a further coordinated contribution to their need is warranted and in line with partner countries.

Options for contributing to Ukraine's self-defence: initial contribution: \$NZ5 million

- ^{s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)}
- MFAT recommends an initial contribution of NZ \$5 million be made to support Ukraine, ^{s9(2)(g)(i)}
- Ukraine's military needs are vast and are likely to continue to expand as their defence against the Russian invasion continues. There will be an ongoing need for the international community, especially democracies like Aotearoa New Zealand, to continue to contribute to support Ukraine's self-defence, and humanitarian needs, as the situation evolves. Aotearoa New Zealand can continue to contribute within the identified funding envelope without any diversion of funding or resource from priorities in the Indo-Pacific region.
- Officials have investigated a range of options for contributing an initial NZ \$5 million to Ukraine's self-defence, with a view to assessing what would be most useful, and what could be provided in the most timely and efficient way. Options investigated include funding contributions to the NATO Trust Fund to provide non-lethal military assistance; and direct procurement and supply of New Zealand goods.
- Procuring goods directly poses logistical and procurement challenges, and at this stage would not provide a means for efficient delivery to the Ukrainian Armed Forces. These options are described in more detail below.

Possible option: \$5 million for the procurement and direct delivery of New Zealand-sourced goods

- Officials have investigated the feasibility of sourcing or procuring items requested by Ukraine (i.e. food rations; sleeping bags; body armour; helmets) from New Zealand government stocks or companies, and note that:
 - In general, the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) does not have bulk holdings of the items being specifically requested by Ukraine. The NZDF maintains modest contingency stocks of essential items to enable it to meet the expected operational demands of the Government.
 - Officials are in the process of checking with a range of New Zealand branded companies to see if they could assist Ukraine. Most companies, however do not have manufacturing centres in New Zealand, so the ability to provide products at the scale required in a timely fashion is limited. We note that recent Ukraine requests for support do not include reference to non-military foodstuffs and that delivery of goods would be logistically difficult. We understand aid from NATO members is currently prioritised to distribution centres in Poland before there is further prioritisation for delivery into Ukraine. These logistical issues decrease the ability for New Zealand to supply direct, immediate and timely support.

- s6(a)

- Tait Communications could deliver ^{s9(2)(g)(i)} to the Ukrainian government and these are ready for deployment (^{s9(2)(g)(i)})

- ^{s9(2)(g)(i)}

may also be difficult to get into Ukraine given the lack of existing distribution channels (unlike others with established links). For these reasons, officials do not recommend proceeding with this option.

Alternative option: NZ\$ 5 million to the NATO Trust Fund for non-lethal support

- The NATO Trust Fund is a consolidated fund through which priority non-lethal support can be channelled. As one of only four NATO partners in the Indo-Pacific (alongside Australia, Japan and Korea), Aotearoa New Zealand can use its close partnership with the Alliance to get non-lethal materiel to the Ukraine military efficiently. Working through the NATO Trust Fund also mitigates the downsides of unilateral delivery, which risks countries providing materiel that has already been provided by others; and/or providing materiel that isn't compatible/isn't interoperable with Ukraine's existing systems. Australia has made a contribution to the NATO Trust Fund.
- The NATO Trust Fund is solely engaged in non-lethal military assistance. Provision of assistance is through the NATO's Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA) following

direct consultation with the Ukrainian Government on their immediate needs and priorities for delivery of assistance. NATO is currently in the process of preparing four projects covering: fuel, military rations, communications, and military first aid kits.

- The provision of funding through the NATO Trust Fund would result in immediate assistance to Ukrainian forces during a period of acute need. Provision of funding would be consistent with actions taken by like-minded partners and welcomed by the global effort to provide reliable support to Ukraine.
- For these reasons officials recommend provision of a funding contribution to the NATO Trust Fund in order to source non-lethal aid as the most appropriate mechanism for Aotearoa New Zealand to make a valued and practical contribution.

Options for contributing to Ukraine's self-defence: further contribution: s6(a)

- Cabinet may also wish to consider making further contributions to Ukraine's self-defence, s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

- *Lethal aid: provided via funding through a third country:* Through a transfer of funds to a trusted partner, for example the United Kingdom, we could supplement lethal military support to the Ukraine, e.g. weapons, ammunition. s6(a), s6(b)(i)

This approach would allow New Zealand to make a contribution to the defence of Ukraine, while ensuring that military goods are provided efficiently through a partner that has inventory and established logistics channels with the Ukraine military.

- *Non-lethal aid:* Options for non-lethal aid could comprise additional funding contributions to organisations supplying the Ukraine military with urgent requirements such as medical supplies, fuel, vehicles and communications support.

- s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

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