

New Zealand's Strategic and Defence Policy : A Small Player Making a Difference

His Excellency Mr Phil Goff

New Zealand - India relations are long-standing and warm. From our common colonial heritage, we share similar institutions of governance and legal system, English language and membership of the Commonwealth. We both strongly support democracy, human rights and multilateralism. We have a common interest in the success of United Nations peacekeeping initiatives and effective global counter-terrorism efforts. However, until recently our bilateral relationship had been largely passive. Military linkages were virtually non-existent, trade flows were very small and visits at the ministerial level were rare. During the last decade, however, our bilateral relationship has deepened in the political and economic spheres, and at an increasingly rapid pace. When I first visited India in 2001, it was the first visit to India by a New Zealand Foreign Minister in 10 years. Our Prime Minister Helen Clark visited India in October 2004, with a number of other Ministers. Our Governor General Anand Satyanand, hopes to visit India at the end of 2007. India is now New Zealand's second fastest growing major export market, albeit from a low base, reaching 355 million dollar in 2007. Coal and primary products dominate, but there is also a growing diversification of trade, for example, in the area of machinery exports for Indian infrastructure and manufacturing projects. People to people links have deepened, driven in large part by the growing and vibrant Indian community in New Zealand. Students of Indian descent now make up more than a third of the enrolments in some of the schools in my electorate. Our relationship, then is clearly becoming more active. This is not surprising, given India's rapidly growing economy and increasing geopolitical importance. New Delhi's 'Look East Policy' and membership, alongside New Zealand, of the ASEAN Regional Forum and, more recently, the East Asia Summit have also brought us closer together.

Defence is an important element of any overall relationship and defence engagement should grow as the wide relationship moves

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Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXXXVII, No. 568, April-June 2007.

forward. Our military links with India are long-standing. Our troops fought alongside each other in some of the major battles of the First and Second World Wars. In 1950, the Royal New Zealand Naval vessel *Achilles* which had fought in the battle of the River Plate was refitted as INS *Delhi*, which began the connection between our navies. In 1952, New Zealand officers served with the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan. This was our first UN peacekeeping mission but it was long-standing one, which we remained part of until 1976. We also supported the UN India-Pakistan Observer Mission in 1965-66.

Though our historical military linkages are strong, our recent military cooperation has been limited. Our engagement currently, is focused on interaction between our respective navies through port calls, the Western Pacific Naval Symposium and senior staff visits. Over the next month or so, the Royal New Zealand Naval Frigate *Te Mana* and tanker *Endeavour* will visit Port Blair and the Indian National Defence College will visit New Zealand. We also interact at the annual Shangri La Defence Conference in Singapore. The ASEAN Regional Forum defence dialogue process and UN peacekeeping operations also provide opportunities for our armed forces to work together.

New Zealand's Strategic Situation

New Zealand does not face presently, a conventional military threat. We are an island of only four million people, about the same as a mid-sized Indian city. Our closest neighbours are : Australia to our West, the South Pacific Islands to our North and Antarctica to our South. We are surrounded by the Pacific Ocean. Despite our geographic isolation, we do not consider ourselves, immune from contemporary trans-national security threats such as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction proliferation or trans-national organised crime. We rely on regional and international stability for our own well being and prosperity, as do all nations.

New Zealand has never been "isolationist" or reluctant to play our part in contributing to regional and international security. In both world wars of the Twentieth Century, New Zealand suffered the highest per capita casualty rate of any commonwealth country. Commitment to collective security, the rule of law and multilateral responses to security challenges have been cornerstones of our foreign policy. Since the World War II, our commitment to these principles has been backed up by a preparedness to act.

Like India, New Zealand has made a strong commitment to peace support operations. We currently have about 400 New Zealand Defence Force and 81 New Zealand Police personnel deployed on 21 peace support missions. While a relatively small number, especially compared to India's commitment of over 9,500 troops to UN peacekeeping; for a country of our size it is a significant commitment. With regular rotations, it means that one third of our Army serves in a peacekeeping mission each year. Given our relatively small Defence Force, our focus has been multiple, small scale, niche deployments.

New Zealand's peacekeeping commitments extend beyond our own region. In addition to our larger contributions in Solomon Islands, Timor Leste and Afghanistan, New Zealand has small numbers of personnel in multinational missions in Korea, the Middle East, Sudan, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. New Zealand and India have worked together in the US Missions in East Timor and we both contribute to missions in Sudan, Lebanon and Kosovo. We also have a strong commitment to play an active role in the Asia Pacific region, which we are both part of. We participate in dialogue on defence and security issues through bilateral meetings, and in regional fora like the ASEAN Regional Forum and APEC. These groupings provide an important mechanism for dialogue and cooperation on traditional and increasingly, non-traditional security issues. New Zealand is also an active member of the Five Power Defence Arrangement with Australia, the UK, Malaysia and Singapore.

International Campaign Against Terrorism

International terrorism remains a major scourge. The spectre of a WMD attack by a terrorist group remains our biggest nightmare scenario. The last few years have repeatedly demonstrated that no region or people are immune to indiscriminate terrorist violence. London, Madrid, Mumbai, Istanbul, Bali, New York and Baghdad are among the many places to have been targeted by terrorism. While the threat of terrorism on New Zealand is low, New Zealanders have been among the victims of attacks in New York, Bali and London.

We have strongly supported the international campaign against terrorism. Since December 2001, we have committed forces, including three rotations of Special Air Services troops, to Operation Enduring Freedom and now to the NATO led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. We have deployed ground and Air

assets to Afghanistan and the Gulf region. Since 2003, we have had around 120 Defence Force personnel in Afghanistan operating a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Bamyan province. New Zealand Police personnel provide police training in Bamyan and NZAID is also managing a range of development projects there. We recently extended our PRT commitment to late 2008. Our PRT has worked hard to make a difference to the lives of the people of Bamyan. It has facilitated the construction of schools, roads, bridges and a maternity ward. Like our other peacekeeping missions, Bamyan underscores a central, but critical point, that our efforts can only be successful, if we win the support of the local community.

Economic and social development is the key to Afghanistan's future. The Afghan people will only continue to support an international presence in their country, if they believe that it will improve their lives, security and prosperity. I asked a military commander familiar with the situation in south Afghanistan, what level of support the allied forces were receiving from the local population? He said that about 20 per cent supported them, 10 per cent opposed them, and the other 70 per cent hadn't committed themselves either way, waiting to see what the outcome was likely to be and what difference the international forces were likely to make to the reality of their daily lives. There is no doubt that our mission in Afghanistan must be underpinned by a military element strong enough to guarantee security on the ground. It is important, however, that the troops on the ground are given the tools in terms of their physical resources and training to ensure that they are able to engage effectively with the local population. Military strategies have to be developed and implemented, with a premium on winning and not alienating local support. The concept of "collateral damage" is unlikely to be viewed by a Pashtun tribesperson as an acceptable explanation for the death of a family member or a friend. The exercise of effective military force alone will not create the environment necessary to lay the foundation for a stable and democratic Afghanistan. This will only be possible through an approach that fully integrates security, economic and social development. We need to foster infrastructure development and to build government institutions that are able to deliver education, healthcare and other core services.

The international community must also commit to the development of alternative livelihood options, reducing its dependence

on poppy cultivations and enabling Afghanistan over time to become more self-reliant.

The Pacific

We have learned similar lessons from our experiences in Pacific peace support operations. The last few years have been seen serious instability across the Pacific. Sadly, much of the Pacific presently bears little resemblance to the idyllic "island paradise" post card image. Ethnic tensions, clashes of traditional values with those of globalisation, limited economic and social development, and poor governance structures have resulted in heightened tensions in many countries in the region. These tensions have sometimes resulted in breakdowns in civil order and violence. Two of the most serious cases have been in the Solomon Islands and Timor Leste.

In 1999, New Zealand committed a battalion of peace keepers to East Timor, to help restore a country nearly destroyed by the militias, following the referendum over the country's future that year. We celebrated with the Timorese people when they achieved self-determination and democracy in 2002, after 25 years of struggle and an apparently successful UN transition led to independence. However, Timor Leste's descent into violence in 2006 underscored the difficulty and complexity of nation building. Defence forces from Australia and New Zealand, and police from 38 countries including India, have once again had to assist Timor Leste to establish law and order.

New Zealand is working with the UN and regional partners in the sixth UN mission in Timor to try and achieve a durable peace and an effective political system. The New Zealand Defence Force has an army company there, supported by Air Force helicopters. We have helped to restore stability and prevent a further bloodbath. But the challenge of changing the political culture to achieve long-term stability, without the need for an international presence, is a tougher one.

New Zealand, with Australia and the international community, is committed to a long term nation building effort. We have also played an important role in helping to restore stability in the Solomon Islands, as part of the Regional Assistance Mission in the Solomon Islands (RAMSI). Together with Australia, Fiji, Tonga and Papua New Guinea,

our defence personnel and police have helped prevent further inter-communal conflict and to restore law and order. The RAMSI mission has made a real difference to stability and security in the Solomon Islands. A sustainable peace requires the establishment of robust institutions of governance and sustainable livelihoods, as well as a culture that accepts and demands the proper exercise of authority.

Stability and progress are mutually dependent. Neither can be achieved without the other. Maintaining an adequate consent environment, for foreign troops to be within another sovereign country's space, however, can be difficult. One way of maintaining a strong consent environment is to foster mutual respect between soldiers and the local population. New Zealand troops are well trained and experienced peace keepers. Most have experienced a number of missions and they avoid heavy handed responses. They work well with the local community. The support of the local government is critical. As a successful intervention is made and a reasonable level of security is established, local power structures may calculate that foreign assistance is no longer as critical to their interests. Vested and corrupt political interests may regard the intervention force as a hinderance to their ambitions. The difficult balancing act that follows can lead to success or back to conflict.

Defence Force Modernisation

In order to meet our regional and international security commitments, New Zealand has placed premium on developing a professional and effective defence force. In the last eight years, we have made significant investments in ensuring that the New Zealand Defence Force is best structured and equipped to perform the missions for which it is most likely to be deployed. We have invested in new and upgraded capabilities and implemented important organisational changes, including a joint approach to structure and operation. We have also shifted towards a more focussed range of military capabilities. Given the high cost of defence technology, this is a reality for many small nations. We have hardened the Army, giving it more firepower and mobility. We are also increasing its strength. The Air Force is getting a significant makeover. Its platforms are being replaced or upgraded. The focus is on improving our surveillance, strategic and tactical airlift capabilities. The Navy will

also increase in size. A lot of investment, in **seven new ships**, is to enhance our ability to protect our Exclusive Economic Zone and maritime approaches. Introducing a number of **new capabilities** into the Defence Force is a challenging process, but it will result in an increasingly capable New Zealand Defence Force, which is combat capable and ready for peacekeeping operations.

Disarmament and Arms Control

I would like to make a few comments as **New Zealand's Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control**. This is not, **as some might imagine**, inconsistent with my role as **Minister of Defence**. There is no defence against weapons of mass destruction, which have the potential to destroy human beings in **unprecedented numbers** and perhaps humanity itself. The Defence Force is **also active** in areas of disarmament, such as clearing landmines and cluster munitions around the world.

Disarmament and non-proliferation are key priorities for the New Zealand Government. New Zealand is an active participant in international efforts to achieve the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons and to enforce a ban on chemical and biological weapons. We strongly advocate for controls on conventional weapons. We take an even handed approach to nuclear disarmament. We strongly oppose nuclear weapons in any hands. The nexus between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is perhaps best described in the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission Report released last year:-

"So long as any state has nuclear weapons, others will want them. So long as any such weapons remain, there is risk that these will one day be used, by design or accident. And any such use would be catastrophic".

The continued existence of nuclear weapons, the risk that more countries may seek access to nuclear weapons, means there is no scope for complacency. We remain concerned that 27,000 nuclear weapons remain in existence today and the rate of progress towards disarmament in recent years has been negligible. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty remains the cornerstone of the multilateral treaty regime governing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It contains the only multilateral treaty commitment to nuclear disarmament on the part of the nuclear weapon states.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I have outlined briefly how New Zealand sees its place in the world, our key international commitments and our defence policy. I have also touched upon New Zealand's and India's developing bilateral relationship. This relationship is becoming increasingly important to us in this dynamic region. Relationships of course, are made up of many different areas. The defence, foreign affairs and trade strands between India and New Zealand are growing. I look forward to working together to develop our relationship further, so that we can better pursue the objectives that we have in common.

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