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OIA-2025-5582

25th November 2025

[REDACTED]@rnz.co.nz

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 13 October 2025 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), the following information

A list of any and all operations, activities, initiatives, observation or other roles that NZDF or MOD in any capacity has with U.S. Space Training and Readiness Command (STARCOM)

For each of the above, the start date of it and list of all meetings with STARCOM, dated, with numbers of personnel involved, and highest ranked officer

The only Space Training and Readiness Command (STARCOM) activity in which the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) participates is the Schriever Wargame, which ran in March 2023 and August 2025. The 2023 wargame was attended by one Ministry of Defence employee and three NZDF personnel, with the highest rank being Brigadier. The 2025 wargame was attended by four NZDF personnel with the highest ranks being Wing Commander and Lieutenant Colonel (equivalent ranks in Air Force and Army respectively).

GAO in US says STARCOM 'expanded the number of seats available to FIVE EYES partners and France for the Space 200 and Space 300 courses' – was NZDF involved at all in this? Please detail all ways.

As STARCOM is a foreign military organisation, the NZDF is not involved in structuring its courses. One member of the NZDF has completed a course offered by STARCOM.

GAO says DOD 'is cooperating with allies and partners on space-related research, development, test, and evaluation. Specifically, one memorandum of understanding with FIVE EYES partners is focused on highly classified efforts [first MOU]. A separate memorandum of agreement currently with 10 nations is focused on responsive space capabilities [second MOU]'

Re the first MOU cited above, is NZ/NZDF/MOD a signatory to that MOU? Involved in it in any way

Please release a copy of that MOU

Ditto for the second MOU above; plus please detail what the objective of the MOU is re responsive space capabilities and

Please release the latest substantive advice NZDF has given to US officials in any agency re NZ responsive space capabilities

The Five Eyes Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) described by the United States Government Accountability Office as *focused on highly classified efforts* is the Square Dance MOU. New Zealand is also a signatory of the Responsive Space Capabilities (RSC) MOU. Details of both are withheld in full in accordance with section 6(a) of the OIA to avoid prejudice to the security and defence of New Zealand and the international relations of the government of New Zealand.

A briefing that was provided to a meeting of RSC MOU members, including US representatives, is at enclosure one. Where indicated: information relating to specific capabilities is withheld in accordance with section 6(a) of the OIA for the reasons explained above; other countries' information provided to New Zealand a basis of confidence is withheld in accordance with section 6(b)(i) of the OIA; advice is withheld to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs in accordance with section 9(2)(g)(i); and, personal information is withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the OIA to protect privacy.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

GA Motley

Brigadier

Chief of Staff HQNZDF

Enclosure:

1. RSC Steering Committee NZ Presentation.



Released under The Official Information Act 1982

Defence Science
+ Technology

RSC Steering Committee NZ Presentation

Nov 2024, Washington D.C.

s.9(2)(a) [redacted] on behalf of:

Dr David Galligan, NZ Chief Defence Scientist

Who's Who



Christopher Luxon
Prime Minister



Hon. Judith Collins
Minister of Defence



Air Marshal Tony Davies
Chief of Defence Force



Dr David Galligan
NZ Chief Defence Scientist



also

Minister for Space
Minister for Digitising Government
Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology
Minister Responsible for the GCSB and NZSIS

The Defence Policy and Strategy Statement

What are the security considerations for a revised Defence policy?

The world is becoming more complex

- A challenging **strategic environment** increases the risk of conflict
- **Climate change** places pressure on resources, lives and infrastructure and could cause instability in our region
- **Innovative technologies** are changing how defence forces and other actors operate, providing both opportunities and threats

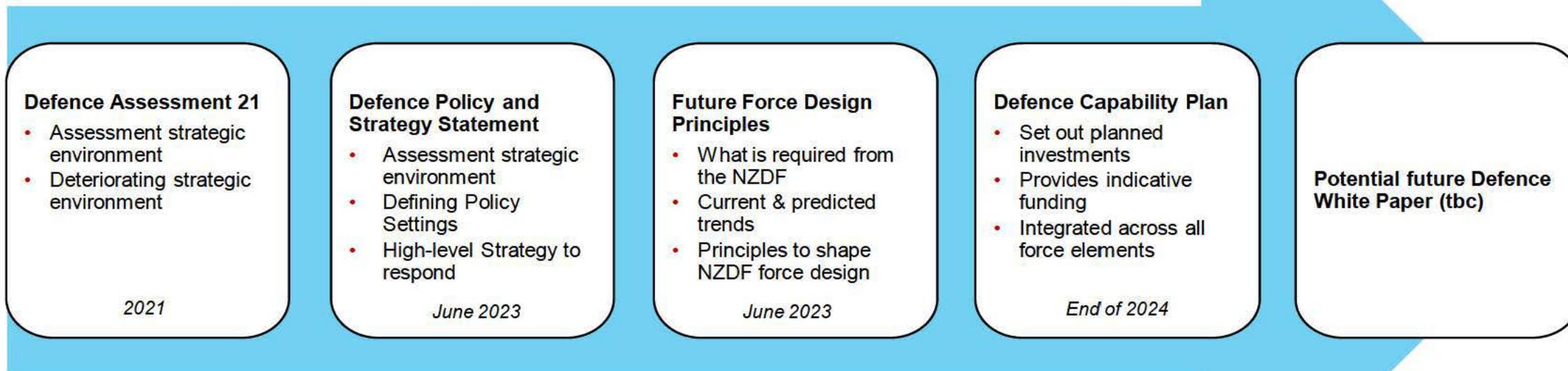


Domestically internal factors are shifting

- A pan-Government approach to national security
- Public sentiment on security themes
- Includes evolving socio-cultural lenses – Te Ao Māori

Reviewing our Defence policy

Ensures that New Zealand's Defence policy, strategy, and planned capability investments remain fit for purpose

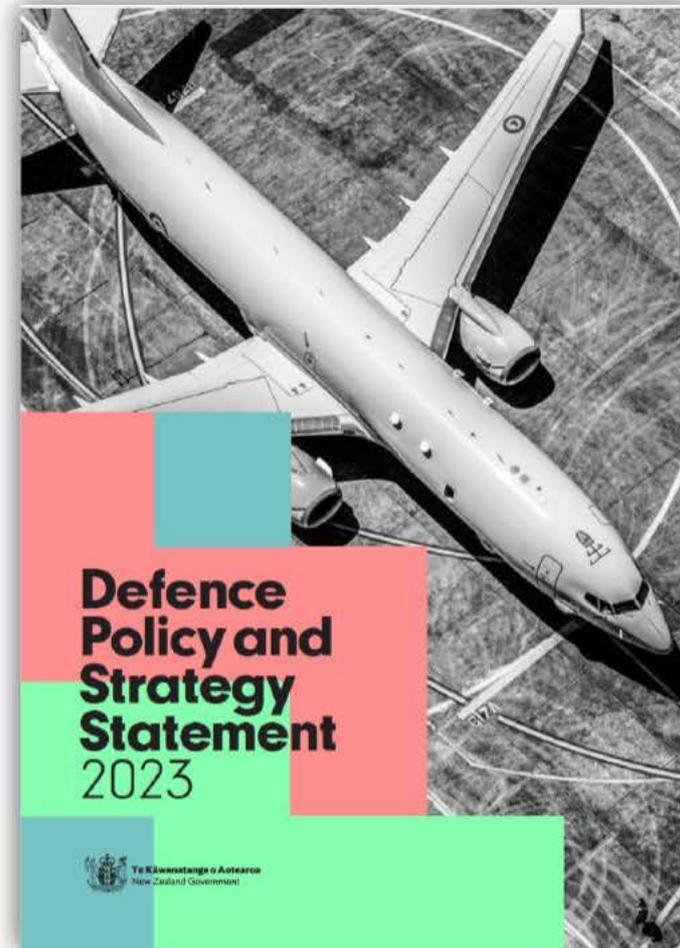


The Strategic Role of Defence S&T in NZ

*To ensure successful military operations in complex, contested and technologically advanced environments, Defence will **improve the effectiveness of its defence science and technology capability**. Defence will **continue to work with partners to leverage shared expertise and knowledge on military technological developments**.*

Defence Policy & Strategy Statement 2023

Cabinet response to Defence Capability Plan will include signals on future **Space** and **R&D** direction.



NZ Space – National Picture

Significant government ambition to turn this sector into a 'key contributor' to the 2030 economy

A strategy to support the growth of our space and advanced aviation sectors

Our mission is to double the size of New Zealand's space and advanced aviation sectors by 2030.



NZ Financial Challenge

- s. 9(2)(g)(i)
- [Redacted]
- Uncertainty regarding:
 - DST staffing levels and budgets
 - Defence Capability Plan
- NZ review of science sector affecting universities and government entities
- NZDF direction to reduce travel
- **Potential impact on NZ in RSC**

NZDF Space

- Joint Commercial Operations (JCO)
 - Run Pacific region cell
 - Provide regular watchkeeping
 - Provide JCO training
- Satellite Operations Experience
 - Methane Sat
- NZ Space Operations Centre (NZ SpOC)
 - Demonstration activities, trials
 - Higher classification
 - s.6(a)



NZDF Space

- NZ Strategic Objectives:
 - Promote safe and sustainable behaviours in space
 - Deepen partnerships
 - Build space operations experience and expertise among NZDF personnel
- Practical steps
 - LNO to HQ USSPACECOM
 - NZ SpOC
- Plan 2024+
 - “Transition from understanding to doing”



Space Surveillance R&D

- SSA Trial Underway (capability development)
 - DST sensor facility and software
 - Air Force operators
 - DST teaching the operators
- Focus: **application** of R&D, not just R&D
 - Real-world satellite observation
 - Realistic OPTEMPO
 - Inform capability development
 - People, training, infrastructure, etc.



Space Operations R&D



- Operations across sovereign boundaries:
 - Scheduling
 - TT&C
 - Download
 - Space-Space
- Automated Intelligence from space-based sensing
 - Maritime prediction

s.6(b)(i)

s.6(b)(i)

Summary

- NZDF is building operational space capability (near term is SDA)
- Space R&D well aligned with space lines of development
- Near-term financial challenge
- Uncertainty regarding:
 - DST staffing levels and budgets
 - Defence Capability Plan
- **Potential impact on NZ in RSC**



Defence Science + Technology

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