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Enclosure 1.

KEYNOTE SPEECH FOR ASSOCIATE MINDEF FOR THE OPENING OF THE NATO AVIATION COMMITTEE MEETING (10 minutes)

Tēnā koutou katoa. Nau mai, haere mai ki Aotearoa New Zealand.

Assistant Secretary General, Chief of the Air Force, members of the Aviation Committee, representatives from our fellow Indo-Pacific Four nations, welcome to New Zealand and welcome to the Air Force Museum, here in Christchurch.

It is an absolute privilege to have you here with us.

You come to New Zealand at an interesting time. We have long observed changes in the strategic landscape: we have seen an increase in strategic competition prompted primarily by China's actions; Russia egregiously and illegally invading a sovereign nation in Ukraine; we see climate change threatening irreversible damage, particularly in our region, the South Pacific; and we see a much closer connection between European and Indo-Pacific security spheres.

The New Zealand Minister of Defence was privileged recently to speak on a panel on this very subject at the Munich Security Conference. There were four key themes to her speech: geostrategic competition in the Pacific, particularly as it relates to the wealth of resources in the ocean and on the seabed; the potential for conflict in the Pacific as China asserts itself more aggressively; the relevance of the United States, Canada and Russia as Pacific-facing nations themselves, further cementing the interconnectedness of security spheres; and that New Zealand has stepped up from day one in supporting Ukraine.

This can be seen through two recent examples in our own back yard. The first occurred just a few weeks ago and involved the passage through the Tasman Sea of a People's Liberation Army Navy task group. While the task group's activity was entirely in line with international law, we were concerned with the inadequacy of notice given about the intent to carry out live fire exercises, and the disruptive effect this had on commercial air travel across the Tasman Sea.

Last year, China tested an intercontinental ballistic missile which landed inside the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone. This was the first such test carried out by China since the 1980s and, as such, represented new behaviour. We registered our strong concerns with China about what we considered to be a concerning and unwelcome development that we believe increased regional tensions and raised the risk of miscalculation or accident.

As you travelled here, you will have noticed how far away New Zealand is from everywhere, to put this in the European context, the distance between Wellington and Canberra, is about the same as London to Moscow, with nothing between apart from the Tasman Sea. This remoteness has provided New Zealanders with a sense of safety in the past, dare one say Kiwis have become complacent about security. China's recent actions have prompted a much-needed increase in public discourse about defence and the importance of ensuring sufficient funding is made available to ensure the New Zealand Defence Force is equipped properly and trained effectively.

This is a subject that is gaining importance, as it is in many of our counterparts in NATO nations. New Zealand must be able to do more than just say it stands for the international rules-based system and democratic values. It must also be able to act - by putting boots on the ground to maintain the fundamental tenets of our free and prosperous society. New Zealand needs a capable, deployable and sustainable Defence Force because, simply put, without national security New Zealanders have no economic security. That is why the Government will soon release an updated Defence Capability Plan. It is a significant piece of work, specifying what resources, equipment and support is required.

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The changes in the strategic landscape I have set out already also underscore that you need allies, you need partners, and you need friends. NATO is a longstanding and likeminded security partner for New Zealand. Our enduring partnership is key to providing the doctrine, tactics, training and procedures that underpin the New Zealand Defence Force's interoperability with key partners.

The finalisation last year of the New Zealand NATO Individually Tailored Partnership Programme demonstrates our intent to continue partnering with the Alliance on shared security challenges, including emerging disruptive technologies, cyber defence and climate change.

Industrial cooperation represents another strand of our engagement, and I am particularly pleased that a number of New Zealand innovators will be taking part in the industry day that follows your Committee meeting. Innovation is a Kiwi strength: running any kind of industry when you're the very end of the supply chain requires you to take an innovative approach.

I'm sure you will hear during this conference about the opportunities New Zealand presents, especially in the air and space sectors. We have lots of empty airspace above us, and are highly ranked as country for the ease of doing business. Not too far from here, the National Aerospace Centre has been established to provide a platform for companies from New Zealand and overseas to develop and test new aviation technology.

Additionally, with the launch last year of the 'New Zealand Space and Advanced Aviation Strategy' New Zealand aims to have an aviation regulatory environment that supports innovation while maintaining safety and protecting our national interests, including national security and New Zealand's foreign policy interests. This strategy will support the growth and development of New Zealand's space and advanced aviation sectors, with a view to New Zealand becoming an even greater hub of space and aviation activity.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that New Zealand is also home to RocketLab, the second most prolific space launch provider in the world; and that most of their launches occur right here in New Zealand.

So, in conclusion, I would say you are in the right place for your Committee deliberations. I will you every success.

Thank you.