

# Proactive Release

8 August 2023

The following Cabinet papers and related Cabinet minutes have been proactively released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

<b>Title</b>	<b>Reference</b>
<b><i>Cabinet Minute of Decision – Report of the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee: Period Ended 23 June 2023</i></b>	CAB-23-MIN-0264
<b><i>Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee – Minute of Decision – Strategic Foreign Policy Assessment to 2035: Release of Unclassified Version</i></b>	ERS-23-MIN-0036
<b><i>Strategic Foreign Policy Assessment to 2035: Release of Unclassified Version</i></b>	

Some parts of this information release would not be appropriate to release and, if requested, would be withheld under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA). Where this is the case, the relevant sections of the OIA that would apply have been identified. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Key to OIA redaction codes:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government;
- 7(b)(i): to avoid prejudicing the relations between the Government of New Zealand;
- 7(b)(ii): to avoid prejudicing the relations between the Government of the Cook Islands;
- 7(b)(iii): to avoid prejudicing the relations between the Government of Niue;
- 9(2)(ba): to protect the supply of confidential information by another party;



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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*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.*

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### **Report of the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee: Period Ended 23 June 2023**

On 26 June 2023, Cabinet made the following decisions on the work of the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee for the period ended 23 June 2023:

Out of scope

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ERS-23-MIN-0036 **Strategic Foreign Policy Assessment to 2035:  
Release of Unclassified Version**  
Portfolio: Foreign Affairs

CONFIRMED

Out of scope

Out of scope

Diana Hawker  
Acting Secretary of the Cabinet

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# Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee

## Minute of Decision

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### Strategic Foreign Policy Assessment to 2035: Release of Unclassified Version

Portfolio                      Foreign Affairs

On 21 June 2023, the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee:

- 1        **noted** that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has completed its three-yearly Strategic Foreign Policy Assessment;
- 2        **noted** the classified version of the Strategic Foreign Policy Assessment to 2035 *Navigating a shifting world - Te whakatere i tētahi ao hurihuri* (the Strategic Assessment), attached to the paper under ERS-23-SUB-0036;
- 3        **authorised** the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defence and the Minister of Foreign Affairs to approve:
  - 3.1      the final content of both the classified and unclassified versions of the Strategic Assessment;
  - 3.2      the release of the unclassified version, including the timing of its release and sequencing with other national security products.

Janine Harvey  
Committee Secretary

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**Present:**

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins (Chair)  
Hon Kelvin Davis  
Hon Grant Robertson  
Hon Damien O'Connor  
Hon Andrew Little  
Hon David Parker  
Hon Nanaia Mahuta  
Hon Ginny Andersen

**Officials present from:**

Office of the Prime Minister  
Officials Committee for ERS

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Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee

## Release of an unclassified version of the Strategic Foreign Policy Assessment to 2035

### Proposal

- 1 I propose the public release of an unclassified version of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) MFAT's Strategic Foreign Policy Assessment to 2035 '*Navigating a shifting world - Te whakatere i tētahi ao hurihuri*' ("the Strategic Assessment").
- 2 An unclassified version is being prepared for public release in late July, following consultation with the Prime Minister.
- 3 A copy of the classified version of the Strategic Assessment is attached at Annex I for information.

### Relation to government priorities

- 4 To effectively pursue Aotearoa New Zealand's foreign policy priorities, a strong domestic understanding of the increasingly challenging global environment is essential. An unclassified Strategic Assessment will usefully build greater public understanding of New Zealand's foreign policy choices; provide a reliable point of reference for New Zealanders in a time of growing mis- and dis-information and also provide insights into how Manatū Aorere brings a Te Ao Māori perspective to its mahi.
- 5 The Strategic Assessment is an MFAT agency document. Its purpose is to identify and analyse shifts in Aotearoa New Zealand's strategic environment and the potential implications for, and impacts on, New Zealand's foreign, trade and development policy.
- 6 MFAT's analysis of the shifts in the strategic environment help provide context for New Zealand's national security settings, therefore the Strategic Assessment is being considered with other national security papers also proposed for public release to ensure coherence of analysis and to manage risks for New Zealand.

### Background

- 7 MFAT has completed its three-yearly Strategic Assessment. The time horizon for the assessment is 2035. Key components of the Strategic Assessment are summarised on the A3 (Annex II).
- 8 The Strategic Assessment (Annex 1) was released to MFAT staff and some NZ Inc agencies in March 2023. It provides a frank analysis of the global context to 2035, supporting coherence and consistency across government in understanding New Zealand's evolving strategic context, informed by extensive consultation with staff,

NZ Inc agencies, and Te Hurumanu (the Ministry's Māori Partnership Group). A call for public submissions was also made and sixteen written and one verbal submission were received.

- 9 An unclassified version of the Strategic Assessment for public release is being prepared in consultation with NZ Inc agencies.

### Structure

- 10 The Strategic Assessment is made up of a number of substantive elements, including:
- 10.1 A discussion of New Zealand's place in the world and how it informs the Ministry's foreign policy, trade and development priorities, interests, values and influence.
  - 10.2 A framing of the shifting strategic context within which New Zealand will operate over the coming decade.
  - 10.3 An assessment of how New Zealand's interests will be impacted and consideration of ways to mitigate challenges and leverage opportunities.

### Substance

- 11 Globally, and particularly in the Indo-Pacific, New Zealand for decades enjoyed a favourable strategic environment, including peaceful and stable inter-state relations, economic growth. Broadly accepted rules and norms have underpinned both regional and national security and economic progress.
- 12 Long-held assumptions are less certain and some no longer hold. The global outlook is clouded by heightened strategic tension, disruption and risk. The international order within which New Zealand must engage to advance our interests is shifting. The Strategic Assessment identifies three key shifts:
- 12.1 from *rules to power*: A shift towards a world where the existing rules and norms of the international system are being increasingly challenged, often eroded, and too frequently disregarded.
  - 12.2 from *economics to security*: Economic relationships are being reassessed in light of a more militarised, more securitised, less stable world.
  - 12.3 from *efficiency to resilience*: We have seen a new form of global growth emerge, predicated on building greater resilience and addressing pressing social and sustainability issues. From "just in time to just in case" – and potentially and worryingly to protectionism.
- 13 In this changing strategic environment it New Zealand will face a number of significant foreign policy challenges over the coming decade. While many of these challenges are not new and are increasingly reported by media, New Zealand will need to grapple with increasing risk and complexity across these challenges, and make potentially difficult trade-offs. How we balance pursuit of our interests with the values we bring to our foreign policy will be particularly challenging.

- 14 The Strategic Assessment also considers a range of issues that will be critical to maximising New Zealand's foreign policy, trade and development opportunities, influence and impact in the period ahead. While it provides direction, it does not itself propose specific responses to the challenges identified.

### **Process for development of the internal version of the Strategic Assessment**

- 15 The classified version of the Strategic Assessment was drafted using a collective and collaborative approach, with extensive internal and external consultation undertaken.
- 16 In June 2022, MFAT issued a call for public submissions from members of the public, Māori and interested stakeholders to inform the Assessment. Submitters were invited to comment on what they considered to be important changes occurring in the world and the implications for New Zealand, our region, people, prosperity, environment and safety, as well as respond to any of a set of specific questions.
- 17 One verbal and sixteen written submissions were received from a range of individuals and organisations. A summary of the themes raised in these public submissions will be published on the MFAT website in due course. All the key themes from these submissions are addressed in the Strategic Assessment text.

### **Unclassified version**

- 18 The public, unclassified version is currently being consulted with relevant agencies. While it will follow a similar structure to the classified version of the Strategic Assessment, it will be edited to the classification level, and to ensure accessibility of document to the public. s6(a)

. The back section of the Assessment will be shortened and summarised s6(a)

- 19 The purpose of the unclassified version is to increase transparency and assist the public in understanding the Ministry's view of its global operating environment. In order to ensure it is fit for public release, and to increase the document's readership and consumption, it will be streamlined, with a focus on using plain English and accessible language.

### **Tirohanga Māori / Tiriti o Waitangi**

- 20 The Strategic Assessment considered the Treaty of Waitangi / Tiriti o Waitangi in its development. Incorporating a tangible tirohanga Māori was a priority. The Strategic Assessment looks to affirm the international relevance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the Treaty partnership.

### **The risks of release and management**

- 21 The content of the unclassified version of the Strategic Assessment is being carefully prepared to mitigate possible risks, including relationship risks with partner countries. It is being calibrated to focus on issues that will contribute to a public conversation on foreign policy and our changing world. While the challenging strategic context highlighted in the Strategic Assessment will likely attract media interest, nothing in

the unclassified version should be new or surprising to partners or informed commentators. s6(a)

- 22 While the underlying assessments are consistent, the Strategic Assessment differs from other national security documents being considered by ERS on 21 June in that it provides a broader overview of changes in the world – focusing on foreign, trade and development policy, and assessing impacts across the domains of planet, peace, people, prosperity and partnerships, where security is one component rather than the focus.
- 23 s6(a)

### **Financial Implications**

- 24 There are no financial implications of this paper.

### **Legislative Implications**

- 25 There are no legislative implications of this paper.

### **Impact Analysis**

#### **Regulatory Impact Statement**

- 26 A regulatory impact statement is not required.

#### **Climate Implications of Policy Assessment**

- 27 A Climate Implications of Policy Assessment is not required.

### **Population Implications**

- 28 There are no known implications for the population.

### **Human Rights**

- 29 This paper presents no inconsistencies with the Human Rights Act 1993 and the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990.

### **Consultation**

- 30 The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (National Security Group, and Policy Advisory Group) and the Ministry of Defence have been consulted during the preparation of this paper. Other agencies are being consulted on the unclassified version of the Strategic Assessment.



## Communications

- 31 This is the first time that MFAT have proposed proactive public release of the Strategic Assessment (earlier versions have been released under the Official Information Act).
- 32 Following consultation with officials, the Strategic Assessment will be released on the MFAT website with a press release from the Chief Executive.
- 33 s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii), s7(b)(iii), s9(2)(ba)(i)

## Proactive Release

- 34 MFAT will proactively release this Cabinet paper, with appropriate redactions, within 30 days following the public release of the 2023 Strategic Assessment.

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## Recommendations

The Minister of Foreign Affairs recommends that the Committee:

- 1 **Note** the classified version of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Strategic Foreign Policy Assessment to 2035 '*Navigating a shifting world - Te whakatere i tētahi ao hurihuri*'.
- 2 **Agree** that the Minister of Foreign Affairs release an unclassified version of the Strategic Assessment following consultation with the Prime Minister.
- 3 **Agree** that the Minister of Foreign Affairs will work with officials to determine an appropriate public launch for the unclassified version of the Strategic Assessment, including sequencing with other national security products.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Nanaia Mahuta

Minister of Foreign Affairs

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**Annex I: MFAT's Strategic Foreign Policy Assessment to 2035**

s6(a)

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**Annex II: Accompanying A3 to MFAT's Strategic Foreign Policy  
Assessment to 2035**

s6(a)

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