

# Proactive Release

Published on or before: 28 April 2025

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 on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters - February/March 2025</i></b>	CAB-25-MIN-0067
<b><i>Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters – 21 February-1 March 2025</i></b>	

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- 9(2)(b)(ii): to avoid prejudice to the commercial position of another party;
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- 9(2)(j): to avoid prejudice to negotiations;



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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### Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters - February/March 2025

**Portfolio**                      **Foreign Affairs**

On 17 March 2025, Cabinet **noted** the report from the Rt Hon Winston Peters, under CAB-25-SUB-0067, on his travel, from 20 February to 2 March 2025, to the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, China, Mongolia, and the Republic of Korea, to undertake bilateral visits.

Rachel Hayward  
Secretary of the Cabinet

Proactively Released by the  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

## Restricted

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

Chair, Cabinet

### Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters – 21 February-1 March 2025

- 1 This paper recommends that Cabinet note this report on travel to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Saudi Arabia), the People's Republic of China (China), Mongolia, and the Republic of Korea (South Korea), from Friday 21 February to Saturday 1 March 2025.

### Report

- 2 The purpose of this travel was to undertake bilateral visits to five countries in the Gulf and North Asia regions with which New Zealand shares significant trade, economic, political, historical, and people-to-people connections.

### UAE, 21 February

- 3 In Abu Dhabi, the Minister met with the UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Sheikh Abdullah went to great lengths to facilitate the visit, the timing of which changed as the Minister was en route. The Minister and Sheikh Abdullah also witnessed the signing of a scientific cooperation arrangement between Antarctica New Zealand and the UAE Polar Programme. This was the first bilateral visit by a New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs since 2021 and it took place in our 40<sup>th</sup> year of diplomatic relations.
- 4 Ministers welcomed the positive trajectory of the bilateral relationship, as demonstrated by the speed of the negotiation, verification, and signing of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership and Bilateral Investment Treaty. It was recalled that Trade Ministers had agreed to work towards the entry into force of these agreements s6(a), s9(2)(j).
- 5 There was strong support for the Antarctica cooperation arrangement from both sides. s6(a), s6(b)(i)

s6(a)

- 6 s6(a), s6(b)(i)

- 7 Discussions provided further insight into UAE perspectives on a range of regional and global issues with implications for peace and security. <sup>s6(a), s6(b)</sup>  
(i)

#### **Saudi Arabia, 21-24 February**

- 8 While in Riyadh, the Minister of Foreign Affairs met with Saudi Foreign Minister, His Highness Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud; Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Adel Al Jubeir; and Chairman of Saudi Arabia's Jockey Club, His Highness Prince Bandar bin Khalid Al Faisal. The visit closely followed the US-Russia talks hosted in Riyadh and coincided with Saudi Founding Day Weekend celebrations. The Minister's participation in high profile sport and entertainment events (specifically boxing and horse racing) was an opportunity to see first-hand Saudi Arabia's remarkable social and economic transformation under Vision 2030, and to highlight growing people to people connections through the successful participation of New Zealand sports people in the events. <sup>s6(a), s9(2)(j)</sup>

This was the first visit to Saudi Arabia by a Minister of Foreign Affairs since 2017.

- 9 During bilateral discussions, <sup>s6(b)(i)</sup> the Minister welcomed the conclusion of negotiations for the free trade agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council <sup>s6(a), s9(2)(j)</sup>

The Minister also confirmed New Zealand's willingness to resume negotiations for a Double Taxation Agreement to support investment and people-to-people links. Discussions also highlighted opportunities for collaboration in food security, racing, <sup>s6(a)</sup> and the Pacific.

- 10 Discussions also covered regional and geopolitical issues <sup>s6(a), s6(b)(i)</sup>

s6(a), s6(b)(i)

### China, 25-27 February

- 11 The delegation then travelled to Beijing, where the Minister of Foreign Affairs met with senior Chinese leaders Vice President Han Zheng, International Department of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Minister Liu Jianchao, and Foreign Minister Wang Yi.
- 12 The visit enabled frank exchanges between political leaders across the breadth of the bilateral relationship. Minister Peters reflected that positive cooperation between was underpinned by a mutually beneficial trading relationship, and tourism, education, and community links. s6(a), s6(b)(i)
- 13 The Minister explained that the comprehensive bilateral relationship enabled New Zealand and China to talk about our differences respectfully and openly. In this context the delegation raised New Zealand's fundamental interests in the Cook Islands, our unique constitutional relationship with Realm countries, s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii), s7(c)(i)
- 14 The Chinese Naval Task Group deployment in the Tasman Sea was raised in clear terms. Although international law provided a legal right for the Chinese military to exercise in the Tasman Sea, the Minister said it was alarming that little warning was provided by China ahead of its live fire exercises. This activity had occurred in a very busy commercial flight area and caused flights to divert course. New Zealand's concerns regarding both matters of difference were made clear to Chinese leaders.
- 15 s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii), s7(c)(i)
- 16 The New Zealand delegation emphasised the importance of maintaining engagement at senior political levels, and in this regard looked forward to a visit to China by the New Zealand Prime Minister. s6(a), s9(2)(f)(iv)  
Political leaders also agreed to the importance of maintaining regular dialogue and



technical discussions at senior officials' level, which enabled challenges in the relationship to be addressed.

- 17 In Beijing, the Minister also met with Heads of Mission from Pacific countries to discuss respective bilateral relationships with China, and current challenges and opportunities for cooperation in the Pacific, and a small group of Chinese alumni of New Zealand universities, which profiled New Zealand's vibrant international education sector.

#### **Mongolia, 27-28 February**

- 18 In Ulaanbaatar, the delegation held bilateral meetings with Prime Minister Oyun-Erdene, Speaker Amarbayasgalan, and Foreign Minister Battsetseg. The visit, the first bilateral visit to Mongolia by a New Zealand Foreign Minister since 2013, marked the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between our two countries.

- 19 s6(b)(i)

- 20 The delegation highlighted important existing areas of engagement, which include targeted development assistance to Mongolia to support rural communities and farmers, and English language training to Mongolian. New Zealand's development assistance is highly appreciated, and additional engagement would be welcomed.

- 21 s6(a), s6(b)(i)

acknowledged that, as small countries, New Zealand and Mongolia depended on multilateralism and the international rules-based order.

#### **South Korea, 28 February-1 March**

- 22 In Seoul, the delegation met with Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul. This marked the third in-person meeting between the Ministers Peters and Cho in the last year. The conversation was genuine and fulsome, covering bilateral political, trade, and defence matters, as well as reflections on global developments and trends.

- 23 s6(a)

he New Zealand delegation reinforced support for Korea's hosting of APEC 2025, and both sides agreed to

work towards announcing a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership <sup>s6(a)</sup>

24 s6(a), s6(b)(i)

27 The New Zealand delegation also met with Hyundai Heavy Industries. Korea's ship building industry had become competitive player globally. <sup>s9(2)(b)</sup>  
(ii)

### **Proactive release**

This Cabinet paper would be proactively released as per Cabinet Office Circular CO(18) 4, on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's website. Proactive release is subject to redaction as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Rt Hon Winston Peters

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs