



CENTRE FOR SECURITY STUDIES

DEFENCE WHITE PAPER PROJECT

NEW ZEALAND CAPABILITY PLAN (2019)

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International relations are an amalgamation of many aspects like national interest, territorial integrity among many others, it is an interplay of these aspects between different nation-states. Defence is the topmost priority of each nation-state and hence leadership of different nation-state's take measures to maintain their national interest and to protect their borders. New Zealand and its leadership are dedicated to adapting to the new age challenges. They developed their capability plan in a wholesome manner, which aims at solving challenges starting from climate change to technological advancement of defence forces. The defence capability plan laid out the investments which are to be made by 2030 and assess the situation to plan investments after 2030. This would ensure smooth functioning of defence forces of New Zealand without any disruptions. This capability plan was made with regards to fulfil the Coalition Government's Pacific Reset which means to increase the efficacy of the defence force in the South Pacific. The capability plan 2019 is efficiently planned to keep in mind the immediate as well potential threats. It identifies the aspects on which it needs to work on and then has set out realistic timelines to achieve the desired agendas for the effective functioning of the defence forces in New Zealand.

The capability plan is designed in a manner which focuses on constant improvement of the defence forces leading to no disruptions at any point in time. The policymakers and leaders of this capability plan in New Zealand expect to see a rise in occurrence and scale of security issues along with new age challenges like climate changes, new technological advancements. They believe that there would be a competitive environment in the national interest domain as there are different expectations of different people leading to conflict of interest. To keep pace with the changing geopolitical environment it is necessary to plan and make investment in the right domains. The Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018 intended at defining the priorities, principles and roles which are expected to be fulfilled by the defence forces, However the capability plan 2019 aims at focusing the capabilities that are needed to make defence forces ready.

The capability plan 2019 is a transparent document as it mentions the estimated time and investment needed in acquiring of the capabilities, ensuring that everyone is informed about their defence capabilities. The defence forces of any nation-state are an integral part needed in maintaining a safe secure and stable environment nationally as well as internationally. The defence forces are expected to work in a manner which promotes wellbeing of not only their community and nation-state but world as well. New Zealand's defence forces aim at promoting stability and ensuring security as it contributes to the development and growth of New Zealand. They are dedicated to work towards maintaining secure environment in the air electronic and sea communication systems. The defence forces are working on gaining access to the space-based services to be equipped with latest technology. Defence forces are even involved in promoting

healthy alliances in the geopolitical arena at the same time maintaining the rules-based order. Under the dynamic leadership of Prime minister, Jacinda Ardern, New Zealand's policy makers when making policies along with the defence forces keep wellbeing at the center of their decision-making process. If there is any civil emergency in New Zealand the defence forces are well equipped with their airlift, land transport and sealift capabilities to manage it well by providing rapid response. By the use of these capabilities, they can even provide evacuation help if need be and medical help in crisis situations. The defence forces with its hydrographic and air surveillance capabilities can provide help to defence as well as policymakers by giving the information regarding different infrastructures on sea as well as land. This would help them during times of crisis by providing them with alternative communication routes. New Zealand defence forces with its patrolling capabilities at sea even ensures that the marine life is protected.

The Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018 mentions that geographic location matters and emphasized the need to focus on South Pacific region as its security and stability are linked to it, being a Pacific nation-state. New Zealand should prioritize the capacity to work in South Pacific in a similar manner as it works in other territories of New Zealand. The defence forces have the ability to operate independently in crisis situations ranging from disaster relief to humanitarian crisis. New Zealand with its sealift capability, if required would be able to provide assistance in the South Pacific region by storing, transporting the equipment and deploy the land forces in a way that situation becomes better until the situation becomes stable. New Zealand not only maintains its security and stability but has been an asset to its partners and allies in the geopolitical arena. The Capability Plan 2019 can be viewed as an interplay of work between various organizations and not just defence, domestically but internationally too. The efficient monitoring of the region would allow the policymakers to prepare for the challenges that lie ahead.

Technology has been associated with development and growth since the beginning of humanity. Due to the on-going pandemic its importance has only increased. Due to New Zealand's cyber and space capabilities as mentioned in the Defence Capability Plan 2019, New Zealand's positioning in the geopolitical arena would rise. Due to the inclusive nature of New Zealand's defence forces this nation-state has lots of options making it partner of importance and allowing it to maintain peace in the Asia-pacific. The policy makers are of the view that New Zealand would be in future required to help its neighbouring nation- states, the Capability Plan states that it is improving its ability to respond to multiple events simultaneously. It is important to keep amending the policies with change in time otherwise it becomes outdated. The Capability Plan working on the above mentioned made sure that defence forces are equipped with up-to-date

technologies, for example, HMNZS Canterbury will work till 2030 and the plan already ensured that further investment is made to buy the latest equipment as well as technology of that time.

The climate change is a challenge which is being faced by the world in the 21st century leading to rise of sea levels, extreme weather incidents like cyclones, droughts, rise in temperatures amongst many others. The major challenges with regards to climate change that impact New Zealand are as follows, a rise in stability operations, increase in number of disaster relief programs and rise in humanitarian assistance and the search operations are also likely to rise. The Defence Capability Plan 2019 emphasizes on the need to increase the Army personnel to 6000 which would prepare them to deal with the above-mentioned challenges along with the help of airlift and sealift capabilities. It becomes crucial to plan to respond rapidly and to even prevent the disruption which could occur.

The Capability Plan 2019 of defence forces of New Zealand is a document that intends to assess the strategic environment and then provide capabilities with which one can deal with the challenges. The capabilities of defence forces not only make them independent forces but also prepare them to offer help to its geopolitical allies in wide arenas. It also allows them to address the challenges which are exclusively related to New Zealand. The Capability Plan states that the forces are ready at two levels, that is, medium readiness and very high readiness. Medium readiness can be considered when the forces are prepared for large scale deployment whereas very high readiness can be viewed as something that when the forces provide quick response to natural calamities as well as unrest in South Pacific. The New Zealand policy makers, leadership along with defence forces made sure that they have the latest technology and are constantly updating it. The core values on the basis of which they make the policies with regards to defence are adaptability and flexibility which go a long way in improving their defence force's readiness to act to the situation at hand. With the rise in resources along with modern technological equipments the defence forces intend on delivering their goal set out in the Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018.

The strategic environment in the 21st century is one which is constantly changing and, to adapt to these changes the Capability plan with its long-term planning will be able to maintain highly trained defence force. The Capability Plan 2019 is informative and promotes transparency. Due to the flexible and adaptive nature of this plan the description as well as timing mentioned are indicative. The indicative nature promotes the fact that if there is a new technological advancement then it can be incorporated in the plan. As stated in the Capability Plan 2019, the C-130 H would be replaced with modern aircrafts which would enhance the tactical airlift capabilities. The investments are being initiated in the following domain, that is, future

strategic air mobility and even the air force can now be trained domestically by King Air 350. The interoperability is key to the improvement of the defence forces. With this regard the P-8A Poseidon would be upgraded which would enhance the maritime patrolling capabilities.

With the introduction of long enduring unarmed vehicles, it would be beneficial for the land as well as maritime forces as it would allow enhanced surveillance capabilities. This would act as an added advantage for both maritime as well as land forces when conducting different operations to bring peace, stability, and security. With increased efficiency of defence forces comes the agenda to not only maintain their presence domestically but also internationally. New Zealand is located geo strategically due to its geographical location which is the Pacific region. The country with its defence capabilities ranging from sea to air and even with its technologically advanced equipments is in a place to enhance its position geopolitically. It can be an ally to the bloc of those nation-states which aim at countering the hegemony of China in the South China sea and Indo- Pacific region. This would not only enhance its position in the international arena but would also promote domestic and national interests by making the region stable and secure.

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