

05WELLINGTON294

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12958: DECL: 04/08/2015 TAGS: ETTC, PA..

C O N F I D E N T I A L WELLINGTON 000294 SIPDIS STATE FOR NP/CBM VAN DIEPEN AND EAP/ANZ E.O

12958: DECL: 04/08/2015 TAGS: ETTC, PARM, PREL, NZ, CBE

SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND GEARING UP FOR AUSTRALIA GROUP PLENARY REF: A

STATE 56903 B

C

D

E

F

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Classified By: Acting DCM Katherine Hadda, for reasons 1.4 (B), (D), and (H) 1

(C) Summary: New Zealand officials from the Prime Minister's External Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Customs Service will attend the April 18-22 Australia Group (AG) Plenary in Sydney

The group does not plan to present any papers or introduce any new initiatives at the Plenary, and are still reviewing the various U.S

proposals

MFAT officials (strictly protect) say that New Zealand Customs will not take direction from other NZ ministries about how to spend travel funds

The officials recommend that U.S

Customs Service work directly with their counterparts on the margins of the meeting in order to ensure New Zealand Customs participates fully in AG meetings and exercises

A briefing in New Zealand by U.S

Customs would also be useful

End Summary

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(C) On March 21, Pol-Econ Couns delivered Refs B-F to Deborah Panckhurst, Deputy Director of the Disarmament Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT)

Panckhurst was joined by Export Controls Officer Wendy Napier-Walker, who will be attending the April 18-22 Australia Group Plenary. On March 31, Pol-Couns provided Ref A nonpaper to Napier-Walker and Disarmament Division Director Caroline McDonald.

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(SBU) Regarding Ref D, Panckhurst and Napier-Walker said that the NZ delegation would not present any papers or suggest any initiatives at the Plenary.

Besides Napier-Walker, the delegation will include three Customs Officials: Mike Wotherspoon and Patrick Cruywajan of NZ Customs Service in Wellington; and Jimmy McCone, NZ Customs Liaison in Sydney. The delegation head will be Marlene Castle, Prime Minister's Department, a Chemical/Biological Weapons expert and long-time AG participant.

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(C) Regarding Ref E, Panckhurst and Napier-Walker said they would share the U.S.

proposals on pumps with the NZ Customs Service.

Pol-Couns asked that they let her know if Customs Officials felt it would be practically difficult for them to implement the proposed changes.

The idea is to make things easier, she said.

Panckhurst said they would also share the biological agents proposal with other agencies.

While she herself is not an expert in this area, she said she thought New Zealand will be unlikely to object if other AG participants agreed to it.

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(C) Both MFAT officials thought the U.S.-proposed regional Nonproliferation Seminar (Ref F) sounded useful.

They highlighted proper identification of controlled chemical exports as a particular area of interest for NZ Customs.

Often, they said, controlled and non-controlled substances have similar names and it is difficult to verify substances through testing.

The two MFAT officials (strictly protect) confessed to Pol-Econ Counselor that it is very hard for their ministry to compel the participation of Customs

Service in any activity, as the Service basically chooses its own agenda and travel.

NZ Customs rarely is willing to fund travel for officials to participate in Australia Group meetings in Europe, for example.

Panckhurst suggested that direct approaches from U.S.

Customs Service officials to their NZ counterparts on the margins of the Plenary would be the best means to get the NZ side on board.

She also suggested that a U.S.

Customs Service visit to New Zealand to brief NZ Customs and other officials on AG issues would be useful

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(C) On April 8, Pol-Econ Couns checked back with Napier-Walker, who said that Ministries had met on April 6 to discuss their goals for the Australia

Group

She said that no formal decision had been taken on any of the U.S proposals, but that the group would meet again on April 13 to conclude its discussions