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New Zealand Defence Force  
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New Zealand

OIA-2024-5186

27<sup>th</sup> November 2024

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@nzme.co.nz

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 1 November 2024 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), *information about HMNZS Aotearoa's activities from August to September around the Korean peninsula and Yellow Sea as part of its inaugural mission involved in enforcing UN sanctions against North Korea.* A response to the various parts of your request are provided below.

- *How many ship to ship transfers were intercepted or monitored or prevented (please specify) by HMNZS Aotearoa?*

One likely ship-to-ship transfer was sighted/monitored and reported as HMNZS Aotearoa headed through the Taiwan Strait on 25 September 2024. It is believed at least two vessels' plans were impeded or interrupted; however, this cannot be confirmed as deterrence is difficult to measure. Other vessels of interest were encountered, questioned, and reported as having indicators of ship-to-ship transfers such as large fenders or scuff marks from rafting together.

- *What did these incidents involve? For example did HMNZS Aotearoa interact with, get close to or was it intercepted by any ship from the Korean People's Navy?*

Interactions involved either HMNZS Aotearoa or the embarked Seasprite SH-2G(I) helicopter conducting hails, and providing information on the vessel of interest to the Enforcement Coordination Centre at Yokosuka, Japan.

- *Was HMNZS Aotearoa overflown by any vessels of the Korean People's Army Air Force?*

The New Zealand Defence Force holds no information to confirm whether or not aircraft from the Korean People's Army Air and Anti-Air Force flew over HMNZS Aotearoa.

- *Of the ship-to-ship transfers monitored or interrupted by Aotearoa, were they suspected to be transfers of refined petroleum? Or were some suspected to be weapons transfers? Please specify.*

All vessels of interest sighted by HMNZS Aotearoa appeared to be vessels that could transfer fuel.

- *In the October edition of Navy Today, the magazine says HMNZS Aotearoa was watched by six Chinese helicopters while undertaking exercises as part of a combined*

*patrol. Was Aotearoa intercepted, overflown or did it otherwise interact with aircraft from the People's Liberation Army Air Force, or ships from the People's Liberation Army Navy? If so, please provide details of the actions of the Chinese ships or aircraft and what Aotearoa did in response.*

The Navy Today article states: *Throughout the period, the ships were within visual range of no less than six Chinese warships, who also flew helicopters in the vicinity. Six Chinese helicopters did not fly at the same time. Actions taken by HMNZS Aotearoa and allied vessels were largely mirrored by Chinese vessels. For instance, if HMNZS Aotearoa and another allied vessel flew their helicopters at the same time, then generally, two Chinese ships would also fly their helicopters. HMNZS Aotearoa was not overflown, and the ship's helicopter did not overfly any foreign vessels.*

Chinese naval vessels shadowed/followed HMNZS Aotearoa throughout its patrols in North East Asia and their actions and reactions to HMNZS Aotearoa were safe, professional and within expected norms. All communications with Chinese naval vessels were of a professional manner and followed the Code of Unexpected Encounters at Sea format. HMNZS Aotearoa's responses confirmed the ship's identity and its purpose of conducting operations in international waters. HMNZS Aotearoa did not change plans or operations because of any Chinese Navy action.

- *Can you please provide all reports, briefings, minutes or memos covering the material requested in the five questions above? I.e. any minutes or reports discussing the actions of the North Korean or PRC militaries around HMNZS Aotearoa during this mission.*

The OIA requires that a decision on your request be provided no later than 20 working days after the day your request was received. Unfortunately, it will not be possible to meet that time limit for this part of your request, and an extension of the time to make a decision, to Friday 20 December, is required. This extension is necessary because consultations are such that a proper response cannot reasonably be made within the original time limit.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

**GA Motley**

Brigadier

Chief of Staff HQNZDF



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New Zealand

OIA-2024-5186

16<sup>th</sup> December 2024

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@nzme.co.nz

Dear [REDACTED]

Following the response to you of 27 November 2024, the response to the final point of your request is provided below.

- *Can you please provide all reports, briefings, minutes or memos covering the material requested in the five questions above? I.e. any minutes or reports discussing the actions of the North Korean or PRC militaries around HMNZS Aotearoa during this mission.*

Enclosed is a copy of the Post Activity Report from Operation WHIO, which provides a summary of the transit. Where indicated, information is withheld in accordance with section 6(a) and 6(b)(i) of the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). This is to avoid prejudice to the security or defence of New Zealand and the international relations of the Government of New Zealand and to avoid prejudice to the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on a basis of confidence by the Government of any other country or any agency of such a Government respectively. A signature is withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(k) to avoid the malicious or inappropriate use of staff information, such as phishing, scams or unsolicited advertising. Annex B is withheld in full in accordance with section 6(a) for the reason explained above. Annex C is withheld in full in accordance with sections 9(2)(ba)(i) and 9(2)(g)(i) in order to protect information that is subject to an obligation of confidence and to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion.

All other reports, briefings, minutes, or memos were produced during the operation and provide details on tactics and procedures. They are withheld in full in accordance with sections 6(a) and 6(b)(i)

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

**GA Motley**  
Brigadier  
Chief of Staff HQNZDF

**Enclosure:**

1. Post Activity Report – HMNZS Aotearoa Operation WHIO

**Royal New Zealand Navy**  
**HMNZS AOTEAROA MINUTE 83/2024**

10 Oct 24

ROA 3350-0002

**See Distribution**

**POST ACTIVITY REPORT – HMNZS AOTEAROA OPERATION WHIO**

**References**

- A. HQ JFNZ OPORD 052/24 – Operation CRUCIBLE 01/24 dated 4 Jun 24
- B. CDF OPDIR 31/24 – Operation WHIO, dated 1 Aug 24

**Introduction**

1. As directed at ref A, Phase Two of HMNZS AOTEAROA's OP CRUCIBLE 01/24 deployment consisted of support to the multi-national effort to deter and monitor compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) restricting the import and export of petroleum products to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). For the whole period of OP CRUCIBLE HMNZS AOTEAROA and embarked Sea Sprite helicopter were s. 6(a) with the Commanding Officer HMNZS AOTEAROA as Commander Task Group (CTG).

**Background**

2. Sanctions evasion activities such as ship to ship transfers of petroleum products at sea undermine the effectiveness of UNSC sanctions.<sup>1</sup> In 2018 the Pacific Security Maritime Exchange (PSMX) was established as a multi-national body to detect and deter sanctions evasion. PSMX nations deploy naval vessels and maritime patrol aircraft, as well as staff officers to the Enforcement Coordination Cell (ECC), hosted by the US Navy 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan.

**Overview**

3. On completion of EX Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 24, AOTEAROA transited from Hawaii to Japan, arriving at Yokosuka Naval Base on 17 Aug 24. At this point the ship shifted TACON<sup>2</sup> to the US Navy Commander Task Force 73 (TF73)<sup>3</sup> for the duration of the OP WHIO phase. This date was one day later than originally planned owing to the need for the ship to divert around Typhoon AMPIL during the passage, and Yokosuka Port being closed on 16 Aug. This authority was relinquished on 18 Sep but, as the ship remained in the area, it

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<sup>1</sup> UNSCRs 2375 and 2397 in particular restrict the import of crude oil and petroleum to the DPRK.

<sup>2</sup> Tactical Control – The authority for local direction and movement for the achievement of a particular mission or task.

<sup>3</sup> The US Navy Logistics Commander Western Pacific.

continued to provide Associated Support to the ECC, on a non-interference basis with other tasking, until 25 Sep 24.

4. During the period of operations the ship and its embarked Sea Sprite helicopter conducted maritime patrol and surveillance, as well as Replenishment At Sea (RAS) of allied warships on PSMX and other tasking in the area. Numerous suspect merchant vessels were encountered and questioned, as well as s. 6(a) ECC vessels of Interest (VOI). In addition to Allied and Partner nations' naval and Coast Guard units, the ship and helicopter encountered s. 6(a) Chinese Peoples' Liberation Army (Navy) (PLA(N)) vessels and helicopters, as well as China Coast Guard cutters.

### Strategic Objectives

5. At the Strategic level, ref B, the objectives of HMNZS AOTEAROA's OP WHIO phase were to:

- a. Contribute to maintaining pressure on the DPRK to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missiles programmes and return to diplomatic negotiations.
- b. Support and enhance New Zealand's reputation as a reliable partner in maintaining Indo-Pacific regional security and the international rules-based system, adding credibility to our relationships with our traditional likeminded security partners, the United States, Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom, and regional partners, the ROK and Japan.
- c. Contribute to the regeneration of the NZDF by providing personnel with meaningful opportunities to deploy on missions overseas.

### Mission

6. AOTEAROA's Operational level mission<sup>4</sup> was to, "deploy s. 6(a) NLT 13 Jun 24 IOT enhance New Zealand's security through a strong network of partners, and to contribute to collective security efforts that promote and protect New Zealand's interests and values".

7. **Tasks.** Tasks for the operational period while under TACON of TF73 were:

- a. The maritime replenishment of ships providing direct or associated support to the PSMX and ECC.
- b. Briefing and debriefing ISO ECC activities.
- c. The maritime replenishment of allied and partner ships within the TF73 AO, but within the PSMX AO.
- d. s. 6(a)

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<sup>4</sup> Ref A, para 9.

## Concept of Operations

8. s. 6(a) conducted operations as a composite ship / helicopter unit under the concept of Mission Command<sup>5</sup>. Ref A gave instruction that operations were to be conducted in the Sea of Japan, Yellow Sea, and East China Sea, and port visits were programmed at Yokosuka and Sasebo in Japan, and Busan, Republic of Korea. Within these geographical and programmatic bounds CTG s. 6(a) prioritised the tactical level tasks at para 7, combining them with the intelligence picture provided by the ECC to formulate a plan for the most effective use of the TG. Thus:

- a. CTF 73, as the TACON authority, produced the broad replenishment plan with dates and locations.
- b. The ECC provided intelligence on the whereabouts of possible sanctions contravention activity.
- c. CTG s. 6(a) produced, and modified daily, the patrol plan to achieve the replenishments as the priority, and conduct as much surveillance as possible.

9. In addition, opportunities to work with partner nations were also sought and exploited to support the Strategic objective of enhancing New Zealand's reputation as a reliable regional partner.

10. **Preparation and Planning.** As AOTEAROA was the first RNZN surface ship to conduct the ECC tasking, planning and preparation comprised a number of complimentary activities:

- a. **ECC Taskord and Instructions.** The ECC Taskord is a comprehensive document that details the concept for the UNSCR monitoring and reporting mission. It is essentially an Operation Order with a full set of Annexes covering the mission. In particular it details the daily battle-rhythm, reporting requirements, and communications means.
- b. **NZDF OP WHIO personnel.** The NZDF has personnel assigned to the ECC to support the broader OP WHIO mission, one of whom is also a USN 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet liaison officer. They were able to provide direct advice and also to act as an intermediary for any specific questions or Requests For Information. Their role was critical throughout.
- c. **Other nations' reporting.** Other nations reports and 'storyboards' were read and understood, in particular for occurrences of interest such as notable interactions with the PLA(N).
- d. **Briefing on arrival.** The ship's Command team, Intelligence staff, and aviators, attended an 'inchop' briefing from the ECC and also from US 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet<sup>6</sup>. These

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<sup>5</sup> Mission Command – The subordinate commander is given a mission, tasks, and superior commanders' intent, (the 'what') and given the freedom to determine 'how' best to achieve them.

<sup>6</sup> Specifically Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15 staff who are delegated 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet lead, via CTF 71 the USN local Surface Warfare Commander.

briefs gave valuable insight and reinforced the planning that had been done from the Taskord.

- e. **Mission rehearsal.** The ship conducted its own mission rehearsal phase for the three days prior to arrival in Yokosuka to test the internal battle rhythm, briefing cycle, dissemination of ECC daily updates and summaries, and ship reporting. This allowed the team to 'hit the ground running' once the tasking started, with only minor modifications post-briefing.

11. **Conduct of Operations.** The formal OP WHIO phase took place between 17 Aug and 18 Sep while under that TACON of CTF 73. This period was from arrival in Yokosuka, one patrol of 10 days at sea, a Logistics Stop in Busan (30 Aug – 3 Sep), and a second patrol of 11 days, before another logistic stop in Sasebo (14-18 Sep). Although not formally OP WHIO, the ship continued ECC support on a non-interference basis from 18 Sep until the 25 Sep during passage and the Taiwan Strait Transit. This latter period in no way affected the ships primary tasking, and provided considerable value to the ECC as the ship transited areas that are less well frequented by ECC patrol vessels. A detailed breakdown of activity is in the classified summary of operations at annex B (SIE), but an overview is below. Daily operating areas are listed at annex A.

- a. **Logistics Stop Yokosuka.** Yokosuka was the obvious and, from an operational perspective, best location for the first stop of the OP WHIO phase. On the east of Japan it was directly on the route from Hawaii, and as the home of the ECC it was the best place to receive inchoop briefs. Yokosuka is a combined USN and JMSDF<sup>7</sup> naval base and easily accommodated AOTEAROA. A downside of Yokosuka however is that being in eastern Japan it is a two day transit from the ECC operating areas, so is only recommended for a first or final stop, if briefs are required, and if its location meets the overall deployment plan.

- b. **Patrol One.** Patrol One took place from 20 – 30 Aug. s. 6(a)

AOTEAROA's first CTF 73 tasking took place during the passage with USS BENFOLD being fuelled en-route. During this patrol AOTEAROA spent time in the East China Sea and Sea of Japan. s. 6(a)

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<sup>7</sup> Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force.

s. 6(a) A

further refuelling was conducted with USS BOXER, a large USN amphibious helicopter platform and landing ship, s. 6(a)

The ship entered Busan on 30 Sep the day after the Typhoon had passed through.

- c. **Logistics Stop Busan.** Busan was a very convenient ROK Naval Base for a Logistics Stop. It is situated centrally in the area of operations, has good facilities and crew respite opportunities, and the pilotage entry is also short and simple. It is recommended for future OP WHIO surface vessels. On sailing from BUSAN a Passing Exercise (PASSEX) was conducted with the ROK Navy Ship CHOI YOUNG to develop regional interoperability.

- d. **Patrol Two.** Patrol Two took place from 3 – 14 Oct. s. 6(a)

CTF 73 replenishments were fewer with only USS BOXER and USS COMSTOCK being refuelled, although others had been programmed so an additional CONSOL RAS was also conducted. s. 6(a)

- e. A joint patrol day was conducted with HMAS SYDNEY on 9 Sep and, on 11 Sep, cancellation of a RAS allowed us to join SYDNEY and Federal German Ships FRANKFURT AM MAIN and BADEN WURTEMBERG for a PASSEX in the Yellow Sea on 11 Sep. s. 6(a)

It provided a valuable training and development opportunity as well as demonstrating the nations' interoperability. AOTEAROA replenished BADEN WURTEMBERG (a destroyer) which was the first time a German Navy ship had been fuelled by AOTEAROA s. 6(a)

s. 6(a). The whole activity was observed s. 6(a)

by the PLA(N) with up to six vessels in the vicinity over the period.

- f. During this patrol the ship operated in the Sea of Japan, East China Sea and the Yellow Sea covering the vast majority of the OPAREA. On the day before entering Sasebo, a PASSEX was conducted with the Japanese Ship SENDAI during which a 'dry RAS' was conducted to prove and demonstrate interoperability between the JMSDF and the RNZN. s. 6(a)



- g. **Logistics Stop Sasebo.** Sasebo was another very convenient port for OP WHIO ships, being situated on the west of Japan in the approaches to the Korea Strait. It is another combined Japanese and US Navy base, and situated at the head of a natural harbour that provides good shelter. s. 6(a) [REDACTED]. The town also offered good respite, as well as good transport links for cultural and recreational visits to towns such as Nagasaki and Hiroshima. It is strongly recommended for future operational stops.

## Operational Assessment

12. **Strategic level.** Against the Strategic level objectives it is assessed that:

- a. **DPRK pressure.** Contribute to maintaining pressure on the DPRK to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missiles programmes and return to diplomatic negotiations. This was undoubtedly achieved. The OP WHIO patrols added a valuable ship / helicopter combination to the ECC effort during a period where the number of vessels contributing to the mission s. 6(a) [REDACTED] with some of those being smaller coast guard vessels or patrol craft without helicopters. The ship conducted hailing of merchant vessels, and reading of Direct Action Messages in an overt posture. The mission command approach to the tasking allowed the CTG to modify the patrol routes to match intelligence reporting, and this flexibility meant that every opportunity was taken to pressurise suspect or known violating vessels. The ECC Director described the ships contribution as, “your dedication significantly increased the ECC presence in the s. 6(a) [REDACTED] area of operations (AO). s. 6(b)(i) [REDACTED]”
- b. **New Zealand Reputation.** Support and enhance New Zealand’s reputation as a reliable partner in maintaining Indo-Pacific regional security and the international rules-based system, adding credibility to our relationships with our traditional likeminded security partners, the United States, Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom, and regional partners, the ROK and Japan. It is assessed that the operation and associated activities considerably enhanced New Zealand’s reputation. The ship contributed to the ECC mission for a significant period demonstrating our commitment to a multi-national operation but, importantly, actively looked for opportunities for other interaction. PASSEX were arranged and conducted with the JMSDF and the ROKN bi-laterally linked to the port visits; this was seen as a significant gesture by both navies. Receptions were held in Busan and Sasebo, and formal calls conducted in Sasebo with the call on the Mayor covered by local and national media, including television. The work

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<sup>8</sup> Extract from signal message: UNSCR ECC YOKOSUKA JA, 260423Z SEP 24.

with HMAS SYDNEY is not unusual, but the broader NATO interaction with Germany is rare. It is considered that the s. 6(a) considerably enhanced New Zealand's reputation with the USN and was greatly appreciated. The ability, and willingness, to conduct an 8hr replenishment with a 'large deck amphib' such as USS BOXER should not be underestimated, s. 6(a)

This is a significant operational capability and New Zealand has earned respect and kudos for establishing it.

- c. **Regeneration.** Contribute to the regeneration of the NZDF by providing personnel with meaningful opportunities to deploy on missions overseas. Everyone onboard the ship, from the CO down, gained significant operational experience from OP WHIO. It is an important operation requiring operational and tactical level planning and execution in an operating area that is strongly contested and protected by the regional players. s. 6(a)

For many this was their first exposure to a warship conducting prolonged operations. s. 6(a)

The experience, training and development in technical skills, as well as operations in general will stay with the RNZN and RNZAF for years to come.

13. **Operational level.** The Operational level mission was to, "Enhance New Zealand's security through a strong network of partners, and to contribute to collective security efforts that promote and protect New Zealand's interests and values". As illustrated above this was achieved successfully.

14. **Tactical level.** The tactical level assessment of the specific objectives is:

- a. **Replenish ECC Ships.** The maritime replenishment of ships providing direct or associated support to the PSMX and ECC. Minimal requirement. The only ECC ship that was replenished was FGS BADEN WURTEMBERG that was arranged as part of a PASSEX to prove interoperability, rather than as an operational requirement. (As the Germans had their own tanker in support). The other ECC ships on task during the period either did not have a Logistics Arrangement in place<sup>9</sup> or did not request fuel<sup>10</sup>.
- b. **Briefing and debriefing ISO ECC activities.** Conducted at Yokosuka, and via electronic means.
- c. **Replenish Allies.** The maritime replenishment of allied and partner ships within the TF73 AO, but within the PSMX AO. Achieved as tasked by CTF73. Five RAS and two CONSOL were conducted during the specific OP WHIO period. Note,

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<sup>9</sup> s. 6(a)

<sup>10</sup> s. 6(a)

that outside of RIMPAC four additional RAS were conducted en route to and from the WHIO AO, arranged directly with the ships concerned rather than through TF73.

d. s. 6(a)

### Observations

15. **Significant lessons and observations.** The most important lessons and observations are below, with a more detail at annex C, and provided to J8 branch in spreadsheet format.

a. **Surface Ship conduct of OP WHIO.** The deployment validated the concept of an RNZN surface ship conducting OP WHIO. The operations follow traditional 'Maritime Interdiction Operations' doctrine, for which a helicopter carrying ship is most suitable, and can remain on task for significant lengths of time, covering large areas, reacting to changes in the situation.

b. **Value of a helicopter.** The Sea Sprite was a major force multiplier for the mission. Without it the mission would be possible but the areas of sea that could be searched would be limited. s. 6(a)

c. **Balance of TF73 vs ECC tasking.** The balance of replenishment tasking and ECC surveillance and reporting added variety to the patrols and neither mission was considered to have hindered the other. A busier RAS programme could potentially affect the ability of the ship to position to intercept suspicious vessels or VOIs and the priority should continue to be articulated in the OPOD.

d. s. 6(a)

e. **Areas of Operation.** The Areas of Operation for Op WHIO can cause confusion. s. 6(a) Whilst the 'spirit' is clear to understand, a review in the context of a surface ship is recommended. More detail is at annex B (SIE).

f. s. 6(a)

### Command Comments

16. The ship's company are very proud of the significant contribution that they have made during New Zealand's first surface ship deployment to OP WHIO. I consider that the validation of a Logistics Support Vessel in a Maritime Interdiction role is a significant capability enhancement for the NZDF.

### Recommendations

17. It is recommended COMJFNZ:

- a. **Note** that AOTEAROA has successfully completed the first NZDF surface ship OP WHIO deployment, achieving the strategic objectives, operational level mission, and tactical tasks.
- b. **Note** that the deployment validated the ability of HMNZS AOTEAROA to conduct a Maritime Interdiction operation whilst concurrently conducting logistics tasks.
- c. **Note** that the ship successfully operated under US Navy TACON, s. 6(a)  
[REDACTED]
- d. **Note** the lessons and observations at para 14 and Annex C.

s. 9(2)(k)  
[REDACTED]

### RC WELFORD

CDR, RNZN

CTG s. 6(a)

### Annexes

- A. Daily Operating Areas.
- B. Classified Summary of Operations (issued on SIE)
- C. HMNZS AOTEAROA – Op WHIO 01/24 Observations
- D. HMNZS AOTEAROA – Op WHIO Storyboards

### Distribution

COMJFNZ

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OP WHIO ECC LO

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**DAILY OPERATING LOCATIONS**

1. The locations of HMNZS AOTEAROA’s operations during the OP WHIO phase, and after while providing Associated Support and reporting to the ECC were:

DATE	OPERATING LOCATION
17/08/2024	ARRIVE YOKOSUKA, JAPAN
18/08/2024	YOKOSUKA, JAPAN
19/08/2024	YOKOSUKA, JAPAN
20/08/2024	SAIL YOKOSUKA
21/08/2024	JAPANESE INLAND SEA
22/08/2024	ENTERED ECC AREAS IN THE KOREA STRAIT
23/08/2024	EAST CHINA SEA
24/08/2024	SEA OF JAPAN
25/08/2024	SEA OF JAPAN
26/08/2024	SEA OF JAPAN
27/08/2024	EAST CHINA SEA
28/08/2024	EAST CHINA SEA
29/08/2024	SEA OF JAPAN
30/08/2024	AVE BUSAN, ROK
31/08/2024	BUSAN, ROK
1/09/2024	BUSAN, ROK
2/09/2024	BUSAN, ROK
3/09/2024	SAIL BUSAN
4/09/2024	SEA OF JAPAN
5/09/2024	EAST CHINA SEA
6/09/2024	EAST CHINA SEA
7/09/2024	EAST CHINA SEA
8/09/2024	EAST CHINA SEA / YELLOW SEA
9/09/2024	EAST CHINA SEA
10/09/2024	EAST CHINA SEA
11/09/2024	YELLOW SEA
12/09/2024	YELLOW SEA / EAST CHINA SEA
13/09/2024	EAST CHINA SEA
14/09/2024	AVE SASEBO, JAPAN
15/09/2024	SASEBO, JAPAN
16/09/2024	SASEBO, JAPAN
17/09/2024	SASEBO, JAPAN
18/09/2024	SAIL SASEBO
19/09/2024	EAST CHINA SEA
20/09/2024	SASEBO, JAPAN
21/09/2024	SASEBO, JAPAN
22/09/2024	SASEBO, JAPAN
23/09/2024	SAIL SASEBO
24/09/2024	EAST CHINA SEA
25/09/2024	EAST CHINA SEA / TAIWAN STRAIT

### HMNZS AOTEAROA – OP WHIO STORYBOARDS

UNCLASSIFIED  
**HMNZS AOTEAROA: OP WHIO Patrol 1, Week 1**  
25 August 2024

- HMNZS AOTEAROA's contribution to OP WHIO, began on 17 Aug with the ship arriving in Yokosuka Naval Base where it spent three days. The visit included a gift exchange with our host ship, JS TERUZUKU, a call by AOTEAROA's CO on Rear Admiral Kanezashi Motoyuki, Chief of Staff to the Commandant of the Yokosuka Naval Region, and operational briefs and liaison meetings at the sanctions Enforcement Coordination Centre (ECC) situated with the local Naval Base. Members of the ship's company also attended an awards ceremony at the New Zealand Embassy in Tokyo, hosted by the NZ Ambassador, His Excellency Hamish Cooper.
- After departing YOKOSUKA, AOTEAROA replenished USS BENFOLD with diesel fuel, as well as assisting their Operational Capability training by conducting manoeuvres while connected up alongside.
- On 22 Aug the ship transited the Japanese Inland Sea. This is an area of constrained water with high shipping density, culminating in the Kanmon Strait near Kita-Kyushu and passing under the Shimonoseki Bridge. A rare experience for a foreign warship.
- Sanctions monitoring patrols including the use of the embarked Sea Sprite helicopter commenced on 23 Aug and are ongoing. On 24 Aug the US Navy assault carrier USS BOXER was replenished with over 3 million litres of fuel over a 6 hr period.





UNCLASSIFIED

### HMNZS AOTEAROA: PASSEX with ROKS CHOE YEONG

3 Sep 2024



**What:**

- On sailing from Busan, 3 Sep, HMNZS AOTEAROA conducted a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Republic Of Korea Ship (ROKS) CHOE YEONG, in the Tsushima Strait.
- The Exercise included Officer of the Watch Manoeuvres (OOWMANS) for ship-handling and close-manoeuving training, and Replenishment at Sea Approaches (RASAPPS) as a demonstration of interoperability.
- A ROKN Super Lynx helicopter joined from ashore and took photography of the exercise from the air.
- This PASSEX is the first RNZN – ROKN bilateral activity at sea since AOTEAROA's last visit to Busan in 2022.

**Objectives:**

- Demonstrate interoperability and develop understanding between ROKN and RNZN, while enhancing the NZDF's international profile.



Tactical manoeuvring at close range



ROKS CHOE YEONG conducts a Replenishment Approach on AOTEAROA



Officer of the Watch Manoeuvres from AOTEAROA's Bridge



UNCLASSIFIED

A FORCE FOR NEW ZEALAND

s. 6(a)



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### HMNZS AOTEAROA: RAN-FGN-RNZN Interoperability at Sea – OP WHIO

11 Sep 2024



- On patrol in the Yellow Sea, AOTEAROA joined HMAS SYDNEY (SYD) and German Navy Ships BADEN-WURTEMBERG (BWG) and FRANKFURT AM MAIN (FFM) to conduct a combined patrol on 11 Sep 24 to demonstrate interoperability between the three nations.
- Serials included tactical communications and manoeuvres, Replenishment At Sea (RAS), and cross-deck aviation.
- AOTEAROA refuelled BWG, their first replenishment of a German ship, and FFM refuelled SYD to demonstrate AUS/NZ/GER logistic interoperability.
- AOTEAROA's Seasprite flew early, with a German Super-Lynx and Australian MH-60R airborne during the manoeuvres and RAS. The MH-60R conducted a cross-deck landing and Rotors-Running-Refuel onboard AOTEAROA.
- Throughout the period, the ships were within visual range of no less than six PLA(N) warships, who also flew helicopters in the vicinity.
- The day provided invaluable operational experience that cannot realistically be replicated in a training environment.



AOTEAROA, FRANKFURT AM MAIN, BADEN WURTEMBERG, SYDNEY in formation (left to right)



BWG approaches AOTEAROA for a RAS – Super Lynx and SH-60R fly in company.



SYD's MH-60R approaches AOTEAROA to land



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Bridge Staff measure distance between units during CLOSE MANOEUVRING



SYD passes the formation – Super Lynx and PLA(N) vessel background left



The end of Manoeuvres



FFM passes AOTEAROA – RADM Axel Schulz, Commander German TG Embarked





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### HMNZS AOTEAROA: JMSDF-RNZN Interoperability at Sea and Port Visit Sasebo

13 - 17 Sep 2024



- On patrol in the East China Sea, AOTEAROA joined JS SENDAI to demonstrate interoperability between the two nations.
- Serials included tactical communications and manoeuvres, Replenishment At Sea (RAS) approaches, and a dry RAS hose hook-up.
- Liaison Personnel were transferred by sea boat to assist each ship with interoperability.
- During the Shore phase AOTEAROA was welcomed to Sasebo by JMSDF representatives along with Japanese replenishment and host ship AOE HAMANA.
- Reciprocal ship tours were conducted and AOTEAROA hosted a New Zealand reception on the Bridge.



AOTEAROA conducts dry RAS with JS SENDAI



JS SENDAI conducts RAS approaches with AOTEAROA



SENDAI flies 'Welcome Japan', AOTEAROA flies 'Koh-nichiwa'



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AOTEAROA is formally welcomed to Sasebo



Ships company of AOTEAROA and HAMANA during reciprocal tours



CO JS HAMANA talks to the ships company of AOTEAROA



Ships company of AOTEAROA and HAMANA mingle after the welcome ceremony

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