



Aide-Memoire

PRIME MINISTER'S NATIONAL SECURITY BRIEFING ON 2 MARCH 2022

To:	Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern Minister for National Security and Intelligence		
From:	Tony Lynch. Deputy Chief Executive National Security Group	Date:	25/02/2022
Briefing Number:	DPMC-2021/22-1510	Security Level:	RESTRICTED UNCLASSIFIED

Purpose

1. This note provides background material for your National Security and Intelligence meeting with officials from the National Security Group on 2 March 2022, 3.00-3.45pm in your office.
2. There are three items on the agenda:
 - a. Update on ODESC activations [Not in Scope] and Parliament Protests);

[Not in Scope]

- c. All other business, including a short update on the 15 March 2022 ISC meeting.

Item one: ODESC activations

3. The national security system is activated in response to [Not in Scope] and the Parliament Protests. We will provide an update on the latest developments in both during the meeting.

[Not in Scope]

[Not in Scope]



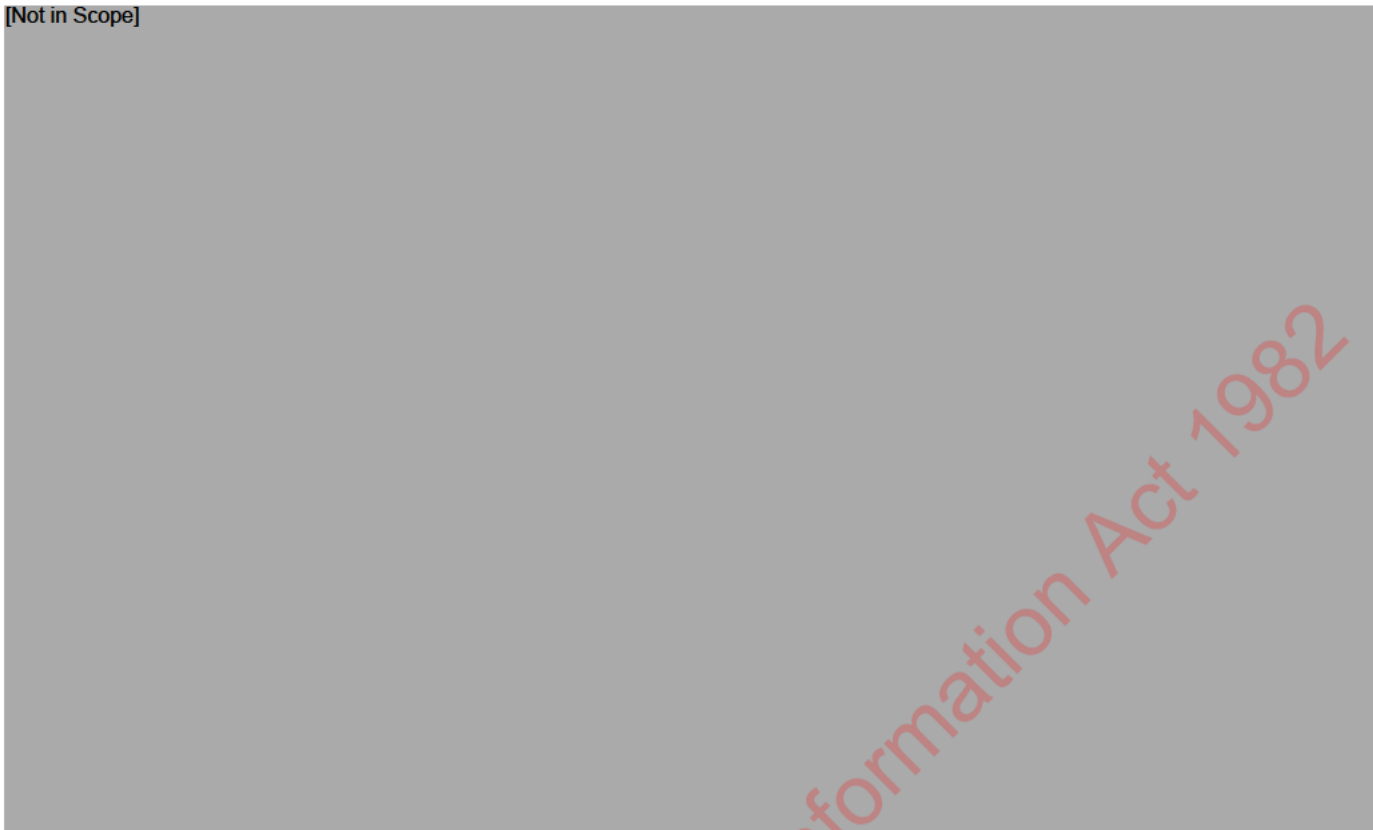
Parliament Protest

7. As you know, ODESC met on 17 February 2022 at the request of New Zealand Police (the lead agency), regarding the ongoing protest activity at Parliament. The NSG continues to monitor the ongoing Parliament and related protest activity across New Zealand to identify system risks and opportunities for further co-ordination across agencies. We continue to support Police as the lead agency; this has included assisting them to convene an inter-agency group, which is meeting every 48 hours. This group aims to enable co-ordinated situational awareness for agencies, and to consider the wider system risks relating to the ongoing protest activity across New Zealand.
8. In response to your request at the last NSI meeting for more information on the funding sources of mis/disinformation campaigns, the National Assessments Bureau (NAB) and the Ministry of Health's Disinformation Assessment and Response Team (DART) are working with Police's Financial Intelligence Unit to provide a report. To effectively determine funding sources will require use of production orders to obtain relevant information and then forensic accounting measures. This is not something that DPMC or Health are able to undertake (this sits with Police).

[Not in Scope]



[Not in Scope]



Item three: All other business

Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) meeting, 15 March 2022

[Not in Scope]



17. At this NSI meeting, we would like to discuss your **response to Green Party concerns**.

18. On 22 February 2022, you received a letter from Hon James Shaw on behalf of the Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand, copying in other members of the ISC (Attachment B refers). The letter raises concerns about the protest action outside Parliament, in particular the presence of violent extremist views and mis/disinformation, and the possibility of foreign influence. The letter notes that the Green Party believes that the ISC, as a cross-party vehicle for considering national security concerns, should urgently consider this matter as a useful way for Parliament to address the effects of misinformation in Aotearoa.
19. We agree that mis/disinformation is an important issue with national security implications for New Zealand, and that there would be value in the ISC turning its mind to issues of this kind. This would be consistent with the Royal Commission's recommendation that the ISC becomes more proactively engaged with matters that present risks to New Zealanders, and require cross-party awareness and solutions. We are available to draft a response to the Green Party on this issue if you wish, and want to discuss with you whether you would prefer:
- To discuss mis/disinformation at an out-of-cycle meeting of the ISC at some point in 2022 – noting timing and priority for this could be discussed by members at the 15 March meeting; or
 - To provide for a separate briefing from officials outside the formal ISC cycle.
20. The Green Party has identified the Justice Committee and Te Mana Whakaatu – Classification Office as appropriate entities to brief the ISC. Officials would also recommend involvement of NAB, DART, and the Digital Safety team at the Department of Internal Affairs, as they are key to a discussion of this kind. In addition, the COVID-19 Group in DPMC has a lead role in addressing COVID-related misinformation, and New Zealand Police have a role to play.

Tony Lynch
**Deputy Chief Executive
 National Security Group**

...../...../2022

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
**Minister for National Security and
 Intelligence**

...../...../2022

Attachments:	
Attachment A:	Attachment A [Not in Scope]
Attachment B:	Attachment B – Letter from Hon James Shaw MP

Attachment A

[Not in Scope]

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Attachment B

Letter from Hon James Shaw MP

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern MP

Prime Minister

Chairperson of the Intelligence and Security Committee

Parliament Buildings

CC: Hon Gerry Brownlee MP; Hon Andrew Little MP; Christopher Luxon MP; Hon Nanaia Mahuta MP; Nicola Willis MP

22 February 2022

Tēnā koe Prime Minister,

I write to you in your capacity as chair of Parliament's Intelligence and Security Committee, to ask that you request urgent briefings from Te Mana Whakaatu – Classification Office and the Justice Select Committee on online misinformation, disinformation and radicalisation in New Zealand.

People in Aotearoa have, and must always have, a right to freely express their views including through peaceful protest.

Many Members of Parliament have exercised this right and I am confident that all uphold it strongly.

However, the ongoing protest action outside Parliament and on nearby streets is harbouring violent and abusive sentiments.

This includes, but is not limited to, threats to public servants and journalists, which cannot and must not be tolerated in New Zealand.

These sentiments risk undermining democratic values and raise potential national security concerns.

It is apparent that the spread of misinformation and disinformation on online platforms has had a role in normalising extremist and violent sentiments as part of these protests.

It is also apparent that a number of the leaders of the various protest factions use direct social media channels to engage those vulnerable or susceptible.

It also appears possible that elements are being driven by, or are linked to, overseas movements and interests, as you mentioned on 21 February in the media.¹

¹ <https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2022/02/live-updates-latest-on-covid-19-community-outbreak-parliament-protest-sunday-february-201.html>. Accessed 22 February 2022.

Te Mana Whakaatu - Classification Office produced a report in June 2021 titled '*The Edge of the Infodemic*', which found that 82% of New Zealanders are somewhat or very concerned about the spread of misinformation.²

Public awareness of this issue is high and concern is growing.

As a cross-party vehicle for examining national security concerns, we believe the Intelligence and Security Committee must take this matter seriously and examine the role of misinformation in order to counter its effects in Aotearoa.

As a party of Parliament committed to a kaupapa of non-violence, the Green Party Parliamentary Caucus feels strongly that all Members must consider the dangerous implications of what is being fostered outside.

The Justice Select Committee is currently producing its final report into the 2020 New Zealand election, which includes a specific focus on advertising, misinformation, disinformation, and fake news.

As noted, Te Mana Whakaatu - Classification Office has thorough expertise in this space.

I believe that briefings from these two entities for the cross-party membership of the Intelligence and Security Committee would be a useful way for Parliament to address this issue.

I have notified other members of the Committee of this request. I would be happy to meet to discuss, with other members present for the discussion if appropriate.

Ngā mihi,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Shaw', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Hon James Shaw MP

Co-leader of the Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand

Member of the Intelligence and Security Committee

² <https://www.classificationoffice.govt.nz/resources/research/the-edge-of-the-infodemic/>. Accessed 22 February 2022.