

The National Assessments Bureau

The lead agency for intelligence assessment

New Zealand Intelligence and Security Bill 2016

FACTSHEET NO. 5

What the Bill proposes

- Setting out the role of the National Assessments Bureau (NAB) in legislation for the first time.

NAB's role in the intelligence community

A crucial part of any country's national security system is its ability to make sense of the global environment. Intelligence assessment helps to do this. Since 1975, New Zealand has had a primary intelligence assessment agency, now called the National Assessments Bureau (NAB).

NAB is part of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Together with the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS) and Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB), NAB forms the core New Zealand Intelligence Community.

NAB does not collect intelligence. Its role is to provide independent and impartial assessments on events and developments relevant to New Zealand's national security and international relations. These assessments inform government decision-making.

NAB staff scrutinise, analyse and provide context to information from a wide range of public, diplomatic and intelligence sources.

New Zealand also receives intelligence from international sources and partners. NAB has a lead role to provide a perspective of what that intelligence means for New Zealand.

NAB has approximately 30 staff, most of whom are assessment analysts with regional or topic-based expertise.

The Director of NAB also chairs the National Intelligence Coordination Committee. The committee coordinates the effort of government agencies in meeting New Zealand's intelligence priorities.

What is an intelligence assessment?

An NAB assessment is a written or oral report that provides analysis on events or developments that are relevant to New Zealand's national security and international relations. It may be short and situational or long-term and strategic.

For example, in developing an assessment on a sudden crisis between countries or the capabilities of a terrorist network, an analyst will rely on publicly available information such as news media and academic writings, as well as official information such as diplomatic reporting and secret intelligence from New Zealand or abroad.

The role of assessment is not to make recommendations on what actions the Government should take. Independent assessments provide a check in the system by providing an impartial perspective on developments and risks to New Zealand.

NAB assessments are made available to the Prime Minister and ministers, as well as government departments and agencies, including New Zealand's diplomatic posts overseas.

Other agencies that provide assessment in defined areas include the:

- Combined Threat Assessment Group within NZSIS
- Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
- Ministry for Primary Industries
- Directorate of Defence Intelligence and Security within the New Zealand Defence Force
- New Zealand Customs Service and
- New Zealand Police.