New Zealand foreign policy in a post-COVID era

PROGRAMME

Friday 2 July–Saturday 3 July
The global pandemic as well as climate change impacts, migration patterns, and rising economic inequality pose significant challenges to the wellbeing of nations.

There is little doubt that the international rules-based system has been severely challenged in recent years and renewed great power competition has also re-emerged. In particular, the Pacific has become a contested strategic space, which impacts on New Zealand's domestic and foreign policy interests.

In this context, small and middle powers face distinct challenges. Unable to rely on the application of power, these states emphasise the importance of a good international reputation, strong diplomatic networks, and multilateral cooperation to establish some influence and overcome challenges that they cannot resolve alone.

As a relatively small state with far-flung international connections, New Zealand's independent foreign policy must somehow balance Realpolitik and its moral values in an effort to maximise the benefits of global cooperation and minimise the risks that global exposure can bring. The benefits of New Zealand's membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO) have been substantial, but Wellington has not escaped the international consequences of problems like the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) and COVID-19 economics.

In many ways, New Zealand and many other small and middle powers are facing a fork-in-the-road moment in international relations. The story of the post-Cold War era is one of growing interconnectedness which all states, including superpowers like the US and China, are confronted by a growing number of challenges that do not respect national borders. It is an environment which is creating new opportunities for smaller states like New Zealand to play a greater role on the international stage. New Zealand has signaled its desire to take a leadership role (for example the Christchurch Call, indigenous foreign policy and the Ardern Government’s more tempered approach to the China relationship) and this requires us to ‘step up’ with clearly articulated and innovative ideas.

This School will explore some of the challenges facing New Zealand foreign policy in the emerging post-Covid era by considering four interrelated themes:

- Values and interests
- Trade
- Climate policy
- Small/middle state leadership

Co-directors

Mr Peter Grace (Politics)
Professor Robert Patman (Politics)
Dr Dennis Wesselbaum (Economics)

Programme

**DAY 1 FRIDAY 2 JULY**

4:00pm Registration
5:30pm Opening of the School
5:45pm Mihi whakatau
5:55pm Dr Dennis Wesselbaum
Co-Director, University of Otago

6:00pm Mr Aaron Hawkins
Mayor, Dunedin City Council

6:10pm Professor Paul Brunton
Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Division of Health Sciences, University of Otago

6:20pm Hon Nanaia Mahuta
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Local Government, Associate Minister of Māori Development

7:00pm Cocktail function

**DAY 2 SATURDAY 3 JULY**

8:25am Welcome (Directors)

**SESSION 1 Values and interests**

8:30am Dr Daniel Twining
President, International Republican Institute (via Zoom)

The geopolitical context: America, New Zealand and the Indo-Pacific region

Chair: Dr Dennis Wesselbaum
University of Otago

9:15am Dr Reuben Steff
University of Waikato

New Zealand’s independent foreign policy at a time of Australian-China tensions

8:30am Professor Mireya Solís
Director of the Center for East Asia Policy Studies, Philip Knight Chair in Japan Studies, Senior Fellow in the Foreign Policy Program at Brookings Institute (via Zoom)

The future of the rules-based trading system in the post-COVID world

Chair: Professor Paola Voci
University of Otago
1:45pm  Mr Hone McGregor
Director of the Wakatū Incorporation, Member Cabinet's Trade for All Advisory Board, and Executive of the Federation of Māori Authorities (FOMA) and MFAT's Te Taumata
Toward a Te Tiriti-led trade policy approach
Chair: Professor Philip Nel
University of Otago

2:30pm  Afternoon tea

SESSION 4  Small/Middle State Leadership

3:00pm  Panel on Small/Middle State leadership
Professor Anne-Marie Brady
University of Canterbury
How should New Zealand use its enhanced international profile to address challenges like the rise of China in the Indo-Pacific region?
Ms Marion Crawshaw
Centre for Strategic Studies, Victoria University of Wellington
How should New Zealand use its soft power in the Pacific region to address the big global issues?
Professor Robert Patman
Politics, University of Otago
Why New Zealand should help lead the call for an International Rules-Based Order (IRBO)
Chair: Mr Geoffrey Miller
Democracy Project

3:55pm  MFAT Representatives' Reflections

4:00pm  Closing Remarks (Directors)

4:05pm  End of School

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