

Quakers

The Religious Society of Friends - Te Hāhi Tūhauwiri
Aotearoa/New Zealand

26 April 2021

Dear Nanaia Mahuta

Quakers write to express our appreciation for your [inaugural foreign policy speech](#) on the 4th of February. We particularly appreciated your emphasis on the principles of partnership and mutual respect, relationships and cooperation. These speak to us of a world in which we are all learning about each other, addressing our common challenges and working towards a better world. We note the assertion of the independence of our foreign policy, which we take to mean not policy in isolation, but policy independent of specific power influences.

We also note the absence of other themes common in foreign policy: those of competition, conflict, dominance and military power, which are so often associated with destruction and the creation of problems.

Despite Aotearoa New Zealand being a small country, we have a reputation for setting distinctive marks on the international scene in a variety of constructive ways over the years. We consider that we need to take a more proactive leadership role in the international arena to support justice, democracy, peaceful resolution of conflict and to demonstrate respect for other cultures.

We note that the philosophy inherent in your policy is consistent with the Quaker principles that have underpinned our commitment to peace for the last three and a half centuries. In particular, we have a commitment to seeking and responding to that of God in everyone.

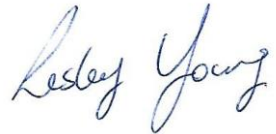
We also write to seek information on the implications of these policies, and what they will mean for New Zealand, and the wider world. In particular:

1. What is the role of our defence and intelligence establishments, and in particular, our combat capabilities? How do they support or detract from respectful relationships to the countries we relate to?
2. How can the New Zealand community in general contribute to these policies? Alongside politicians and diplomats how can people from business, academia, NGOs and all communities deepen our understanding and appreciation of other countries?
3. What do these changes in policies mean for the NZ public, our sense of identity and security? Are you considering any sort of publicity programme to help the community understand what these new policies mean for our place in what may seem an increasingly threatening environment?

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In summary, we very much value the constructive nature of your approach to international relations and hope that it is successful in this challenging world. We look forward to learning more about your programme and welcome any information on the ways we might contribute.

Yours in Peace and Friendship

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lesley Young". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lesley Young
Yearly Meeting Clerk

Cc Ministers and Members of Parliament.