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12958: DECL: 06/26/2018 TAGS: PHUM, PREL, ..

C O N F I D E N T I A L WELLINGTON 000199 SIPDIS STATE FOR EAP/ANP, IO/UNP, DRL/MLGA E.O

12958: DECL: 06/26/2018 TAGS: PHUM, PREL, NZ SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND VIEWS ON USG AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS

COUNCIL REF: STATE 61034

Classified By: Political/Economic Counselor Margaret McKean; Reason 1.4 (b) (d) 1

(C) On June 18, Pol/Econ Counselor met with MFAT Deputy Director for the UN, Human Rights and Commonwealth Division, Michael McBryde to discuss reftel contents

McBryde had recently returned from Geneva, where he had participated in the Human Rights Council discussions

Senior MFAT Policy Officer from the same Division, Richard Kay, also participated in the meeting

Pol/Econ Counselor presented the USG arguments based on points provided in reftel

McBryde opened by stressing that New Zealand attaches a great deal of importance to the Human Rights Council and is seeking a seat during the May 2009 HRC elections

He allowed that the GNZ sees some validity to the points raised by the USG

McBryde also noted that New Zealand had high hopes that the current Human Rights Council would be an improvement over the old Commission. Nevertheless, the GNZ is committed to trying to work with the HRC

2

(C) McBryde reported that he went to a WEOG meeting in Geneva during his two-week stay in which a USG official briefed WEOG representatives on the points outlined in reftel

The WEOG Vice President from the Netherlands, continued McBryde, represented the views of some other delegates by noting that many shared the

views of the USG regarding the HRC

The question is whether you stay in the room and try to fix the problems, or leave

He offered that the USG presence at the meetings was practically "invisible." McBryde said that while in Geneva, New Zealand Permrep Ambassador Don MacKay had noted that the USG was not in a position to complain about the structure of the HRC, having objected to universal membership in the body (which New Zealand supported)

There are majorities from parts of the world that are less than helpful in the HRC

According to McBryde, there is perhaps less support for the current USG position on the HRC as a result

3

(C) The MFAT official noted in closing that he hoped the USG decision on the HRC would not preclude US-New Zealand engagement on issues such as Burma, and that the two countries could continue close cooperation on a range of human rights issues