RDFRA SUBMISSION (ARMY RESERVE)

TO

THE WHITE PAPER ON DEFENCE

NOVEMBER 2013

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1:1 Introduction

The Reserve Defence Forces (RDF) is the reserve component of Ireland's Defence Forces which consists of the Army Reserve and the Naval Service Reserve. The RDF in some capacity has existed for most of the State's history and is the focus on this submission. The NSR RDFRA committee have submitted a separate submission.

The recent financial crisis in Ireland has served as a catalyst for reorganisation among many public bodies in an effort to save cost and to make them more efficient. This is nothing new to the country or indeed the world where new public management mechanisms have been implemented in financial crisis as a response from weary politicians to take control over the public sector.

Restructuring in the Defence Forces and the public sector at large is not a new concept. As an organisation changes roles, personnel or size, the broad structure of the organisation must be flexible enough to encompass the changes needed to reflect the new organisation.

The challenge however, is how best to implement these changes, while constantly reviewing the effects of the change so that the intended outcomes are met and not succumbing to failure.

The Defence Forces was included in the recent overhauls with the Army going from a three brigade structure to two. The RDF was to 'dovetail' these changes which was examined in the Value for Money report into the RDF.

The Value for Money report was released in November 2012 after being commissioned in 2009 and was overseen by a joint civilian/military steering committee and was stated in its executive summary to have "regard to the guidelines for the conduct of such reviews and in accordance with other Department of Public Expenditure and Reform guidelines". The VFM was accepted by Minister Alan Shatter and used as the foundation for restructure in the RDF.

1:2 Executive summaries

The basis for the existence of the RDF comes from the White Paper 2000 where it is stated that "Ireland provides for its core defence requirements through the PDF. The availability of supplementary forces, in the form of reserves, offers a cost-effective means of achieving an overall strength target through a judicious combination of standing and reserve forces". The White Paper goes on to further define the role of the RDF as supporting the PDF "in its contingency defence roles in an emergency situation. In peacetime the main function of the RDF should be to train and prepare for these contingency roles".

Lack of Clarity of Purpose

Many cases of rapid restructuring, nationally and internationally, have shown insufficient clarity about what the organisation was expected to do and what it was for. This is certainly mirrored in the case of the RDF and is even broached in the recent Green Paper.

As already noted, the role of the RDF as defined by the 2000 White Paper was to augment the PDF in contingencies. The role was therefore to prepare and train for these contingencies. The lack of an operational role in an Aid to Civil Power or Aid to Civil Authority capacity has left many members of the RDF disillusioned with their service. In the 2000 White Paper, it was stated that 'There is some ambiguity regarding the role of the RDF - this can have an adverse effect on morale'. The VFM was an opportune time to address these issues but unfortunately did not. The VFM maintains that all operational outputs of the Defence Forces are being met and therefore the utilisation of reservists is unnecessary. This contradicts the historical use of reservists in barrack duties around the country.

Having a clear purpose for an organisation motivates the membership to deliver targets. This is absent from the RDF in its current guise. This has been offset with the introduction of individual Key Performance Indicators which seek to monitor the individual reservist's service annually. The problem here is, that the KPI's focus on the micro and not the macro which is needed also if the RDF is to have a clear role.

In the 2013 Green Paper, it is stated that 'members of the Reserve be afforded the opportunity to undertake Aid to the Civil Authority type tasks in a voluntary unpaid capacity'. Therefore, should these tasks get legislated for in the White Paper, it may be possible to find a role for the RDF akin to other part-time bodies in the state such as Civil Defence and the various river rescue organisations?

1:3 Tasking the RDF

Following the 2005 restructure of the RDF, the establishment stood at 9,692 which mirrored the 3 brigade structure in the Army as well as 400 in the Naval Service Reserve (NSR). Following the 2012 restructure, the new establishment stands at 4,069 including 200 in the NSR.

The RDF must be assigned a clear purpose to motivate the membership to deliver targets. This is absent from the RDF in its current guise. This has been offset with the introduction of individual Key Performance Indicators which seek to monitor the individual reservist's service annually. The problem here is, that the KPI's focus on the micro and not the macro which is needed also if the RDF is to have a clear role.

The continuous cycle of training for trainings sake in and of itself is a limiting factor both in financial terms and morale of those serving in the RDF.

The effective use and deployment of the RDF could yield a significant number of posts currently filled by PDF personnel who are not required to deploy operationally, thereby enabling it to shift PDF personnel to the front of the organisation thereby reducing enormously the time to surge numbers if and when required.

1:4 what meaningful tasks can be assigned to the RDF?

Without the necessary mechanism to give employment protection to serving members of the RDF the tasks that can be assigned to the RDF are severely limited. The RDF has among its ranks personal that can undertake these tasks and thus free up members of the PDF for front line duties.

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The very nature of service in the reserve means that members can be called up to serve by the Minister in an emergency. While this is seen as a positive and necessary part of their service, there remain concerns what will happen to their civilian employment if reservists are called out to duty. An example of legislation which allows the minister to call up reserves can be seen from the Defence Act, 1954.

90.—(1) The Minister may, at any time when occasion appears to require, direct that all or so many reservists as he thinks necessary be called out in aid of the civil power in the maintenance or restoration of the public peace.

Thus, a reservist is not protected by legislation visa-a-visa employment protection if called out on service. But even in times of peace, the ability of a reservist to undertake military training and return to their civilian career with new skill-sets is hugely beneficial to employers and vice-versa.

Therefore these tasks must be legislated for in the White Paper.

1:5 Infrastructures

Is there a role for the RDF in maintaining DOD INFRASTRUCTURE?

A VFM of lands and the built environment of the DOD were complete in the recent past with much emphasis on the maintenance costs of the property portfolio. Qualified RDF persons with the skill sets could be engaged in this area .The DOD is incurring increased costs in routine maintenance, and Defence-wide ICT (Information, and Communications Technology) particularly to outsourced companies.

The RDF has the skill sets to reduce these costs by deployment of these personnel.

The threat of cyber attacks will continue to grow, with potentially crippling consequences. Critical national infrastructure is increasingly reliant on web-based information and communication networks for its effective operation. Modern defence forces and intelligence services are integrated into these networks. The threat of cyber attacks will continue to grow, with potentially crippling consequences... This trend is likely to increase, and has the potential to bring the economy to a standstill .The DOD may have a role in securing the states cyber infrastructure with RDF personnel in roles where they are qualified

1:6 Best use of the RDF resource for the next 25 years.

Failure to Support Reservists

When Winston Churchill classed reservists as “Twice the Citizen”, it was recognised that reservists also have another life. Reservists in Ireland come from all walks of life and are employed in every type of employment. The VFM used international comparisons in the report, namely: the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. What the VFM did not stress however, was that each of these countries have a support system in place to allow reservists serve their country without affecting their civilian careers.

The White Paper must stress the importance of the RDF and enable legislation to give a role to the RDF so that a clear purpose can be defined which would benefit the morale of

the individual as well as the State in an emergency situation where the RDF could be deployed in an ATCA role.

1:7 Reserve task forces of digital volunteers.

New technologies for collecting and analysing information are becoming increasingly important to the all organisations including the DOD, in the humanitarian, human rights, and election monitoring and media space. Most of the time, however, the DOD may not have bandwidth to dedicate existing staff and resources to create live maps Access to a skilled volunteer source for support through RDF members would solve this problem. The purpose of the Reserve task force is therefore to provide dedicated crowd sourcing, mapping, data scrambling and technology testing support for the DOD, particularly at local level. This would also give the PDF and enhanced capability in emergency situations. In recent bad weather incidents and Forest fire outbreaks timely information was unavailable for days .On overseas missions the PDF could also use this resource from Ireland.

Controlling operating and capital costs while meeting stringent service requirements within the Defence Budget whilst a computing environment is expanding and becoming more complex, the resources and budget to manage IT are, in many cases, diminishing. The DOD will need to find ways to realize higher productivity from existing staff, increase utilization of the existing infrastructure, and reduce acquisition, implementation and management costs for their IT infrastructure. The RDF can with its skilled personnel provide some of these services to the DOD

1:8 Conclusions

The role of the RDF must be redefined in the new White Paper.

A mechanism to safe guard employment must be undertaken.

The skill sets of RDF members must be utilised

Active roles must be assigned to the RDF.

Members of the RDF must be on the next VFM steering committee.

Nation Executive RDFRA