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Joint Reserve Participation in International Operations: A Place for Solitudes?

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ABSTRACT

The Canadian Forces (CF) is structured to operate both at home and abroad. Within this military structure the Reserve Force component provides a large pool of personnel, trained to varying levels, capable of augmenting the Regular Force. This augmentation includes extensive participation in international operations. Historically, Reservists have responded to the call of duty, and they have participated in the majority of CF missions conducted outside Canada, although mostly in an ad hoc manner. This participation trend has set a high watermark for the Reserve Force, but it should not be taken for granted. There are many challenges encountered when a part-time force is used as a key component in expeditionary operations, not the least of which is a requirement to ensure over-arching plans and policies are in place to facilitate the efficient use of a limited resource. The CF has been fortunate in generating Reservists in this capacity, but it has thus far been conducted within environmental “*stove-pipes.*”

The global security environment post-9/11 is far from stable, and it can be reasonably assumed that the Canadian military will remain actively engaged in overseas missions for the foreseeable future. If the CF is to be effective in this forum, the use of the Reserve Force as a valuable (but limited) resource must be coordinated at the highest levels. New operational commands, environmental responsibilities, an emphasis on joint force capabilities, and the imminent expansion of the CF all combine to create a significant opportunity to examine the way our Reserve Forces are generated and employed. Within this context the CF must conduct detailed Reserve activation planning and coordination at the highest levels to ensure the most effective and efficient use of Reservists within an increasingly unified joint force.

INTRODUCTION

Many people may be familiar with Canada's citizen soldiers who left their homes to take up arms in far away places to fight in the Boer War in South Africa, World War One, World War Two, and Korea. What fewer people realize is the extensive use of Reservists in Canadian Forces (CF) operations and peacekeeping missions in the post-Korean era. The reason for this is not surprising. Canada uses a standing professional military force, and the public perception of the Reserve Force (not wrongly) is one of a part-time, domestic resource – on hand for civil assistance, or maybe even mobilization if all-out war were to ever materialize.

Not since the Korean War has the CF made a distinct effort to deploy Reserve Forces in large numbers as part of an expeditionary contingent. In fact, Reservists were deployed to Korea as part of the 25th Canadian Infantry Brigade because the Regular Force Army was assigned to the defence of Canada, and therefore not easily mobilized to support the initial brigade group contribution.¹ In the years after Korea, the Regular Forces grew to become the predominant resource for military operations domestically and internationally. The Cold War era was not conducive to a large Reserve Force, as it was expected to culminate in a rapid build-up of military forces combined with the widespread use of nuclear weapons to make World War Three a short, strategic war, and not a series of conventional battles over a prolonged period that could permit a multi-staged mobilization of forces.²

¹ *Report of the Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves*, The Honourable Brian Dickson, Chairman, (Ottawa: Canada Communication Group, 1995), 12.

² Conference of Defence Associations. *Task Force Study of Factors to Enhance Reserve Contributions to the Total Force – Final Report* (Ottawa: n.p., 1992), 3.

The decline of the Reserve Force took hold and continued unabated throughout the Cold War, such that recovery became very difficult when diminishing defence budgets and lack of political will forced the military to “*do more with less*” after the Warsaw Pact fell into disarray and eventually collapsed. As a result of the changed security environment, Canada had reached a point where the concept of having a large base of part-time forces became relevant, but not feasible under the fiscal constraints imposed by successive governments.

AIM

This paper asserts that there is a lack of strategic-level mobilization/activation planning and guidance within the CF as it pertains to Reserve Force participation in international operations. The various environments are quite successful in generating Reservists, but the relatively ad hoc approach used to capitalize on this valuable resource results in unnecessary inefficiencies. Based upon the observations contained in this study, it is argued that there is a critical need to establish detailed strategic mobilization/activation plans, in conjunction with high-level coordination, to enable more efficient Reserve participation in CF missions abroad. As the commander responsible for both force generation and force employment, the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) is the singular authority responsible for the operational capability of the CF. Thus, it will be proposed that the strategic solution manifest itself in the form of a CDS-empowered, joint-staffed Reserve activation and deployment organization to provide appropriate high-level direction and focus on the full range of expeditionary requirements, from Reserve Force generation to Reserve Force employment.

In effect, planning coordination and guidance at this level would provide national joint coordination, a single point of focus for the environments, and a framework to ensure that CF mobilization/activation aims and objectives are achieved by initiating a more deliberate process. An activation and deployment cell established under the authority of the CDS would effectively provide a strategic link between force generators and force employers, and it would also provide a forum to resolve friction when this limited resource is stretched between competing organizations.

OUTLINE

Recent changes to the CF command and control structure, in the form of *Transformation*, have resulted in a significant departure from the “*old way of doing business*.” These changes provide a timely opportunity to examine the Reserve capacity to continue to play a key role in Canada’s expeditionary capability. Accordingly, this paper will review the nature of Reserve service, followed by the issues associated with the mobilization/activation of a part-time force – including a more focused description of mobilization beyond the purely doctrinal sense. The challenges experienced by other nations will provide a comparative analysis before considering the issue within a current Canadian context. A review of Reserve mobilization/activation issues within each environment will illustrate the positive foundation upon which to build a strategic solution. The joint arena is then examined, followed by a summary of various factors and considerations. Once the over-arching background has been presented, the paper will describe the CF’s “*stove-piped*” processes regarding the use of Reserve Forces on international operations, essentially reducing the true capacity of a joint and unified CF. The concluding proposal for a strategic-level activation and deployment cell is offered to

provide planning guidance and focused coordination of the various operational-level activities. This is only an initial step towards a more effective, deployable CF, and it should lead to further examination of this critical aspect of expeditionary capabilities.

RESERVE SERVICE

The Reserve Force is composed of four sub-components: the Primary Reserve, the Supplementary Reserve, the Cadet Instructor Cadre, and the Canadian Rangers. For the purpose of this paper any reference to Reserve Forces is only meant to include the Primary Reserve, as it is the only sub-component capable of activating serving personnel for deployment on international operations. Within the Primary Reserve there are three environmental components: the Navy Reserve, the Army Reserve, and the Air Reserve. There are also specialist Reserve components, including the Communication Reserve and the Health Services Reserve.

The CF applies different terms of service to the Regular Force and the Reserve Force under the National Defence Act (NDA). Liability to serve, either domestically or internationally, cannot be imposed on a Reservist without consent unless so directed by the Governor in Council.³ For deployment on international operations, which includes any form of service outside Canada, participating Reservists are automatically deemed to be on Active Service.⁴ Notwithstanding the political and legal conditions that must be present in order to affect this type of service, or the even more complex issue of conscription, this paper is only concerned with the utilization of the Reserve Force in a voluntary context within the current operational environment.

³ Department of Justice, *National Defence Act- Part II The Canadian Forces* (Ottawa: n.p., 1985) 33(3).

⁴ Department of National Defence, *Queen's Regulations and Orders for the Canadian Forces* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence); http://www.admfincs.forces.gc.ca/qr_o/voll/intro_e.asp; Internet; accessed 25 September 2006.

MOBILIZATION

The use of Reserve Forces in any military fashion frequently conjures up the concept of mobilization. The current CF Joint doctrine defines mobilization as:

The act of preparing for contingencies, war or other emergencies, through assembling and organizing national resources, including routine operational functions, which require re-allocation of resources or reorganization of elements; and the process by which the armed forces or parts thereof are brought to a state of readiness for war or other national emergency. This includes assembling and organizing personnel, supplies and material for active military service.⁵

CF mobilization doctrine is quite generic and it is based on the relatively outdated 1994 White Paper, which entails four stages to transition from routine peacetime operations to total national mobilization.⁶ The lack of a comprehensive doctrine upon which to plan Reserve Force mobilization is noted in the 1995 Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves (SCRR)⁷, and in its ten-year update.⁸ The SCRR specifically recommended the production of a national mobilization plan, as well as amendments to the 1994 White Paper plan for mobilization to include clearly defined roles for the Reserve Force. The updated Joint Doctrine for Mobilization continues to reflect the 1994 White Paper, but it is the fact that it is doctrine, and not a prescriptive process for joint planning that leads to the heart of coordinating pan-Reserve participation in international operations. Thus, in the context of this paper, mobilization should be viewed as a dynamic activation and employment process, and not as a purely doctrinal concept.

⁵ Department of National Defence, B-GJ-005-705/FP-000 *Canadian Forces Joint Doctrine on Mobilization* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2003), 1-3.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 2-1.

⁷ *Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves*, 74.

⁸ Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute, *The Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves, 1995: Ten Years Later* (Calgary: n.p., 2005), 36.

Before examining mobilization (or activation) in the international sense, it is imperative to note that it is not the primary role of the Reserve or Regular Force. The government of Canada explicitly states in its International Policy Statement (IPS) that... “[t]he first priority of the CF will be the protection of Canada itself.”⁹ In fact, the decision to increase the Reserve Force by 3000 personnel is intended to build on domestic strength, not provide international augmentation of overseas deployments, although it can be argued that it will effectively increase both capacities.¹⁰ The IPS on Defence is also clear regarding the domestic role of the CF as it emphasizes the strategic imperative of homeland and continental defence. It also refers to the use of Reserve Forces fully integrated with the Regular Force in all environments to enhance domestic security.¹¹ It can be argued that domestic security is inextricably tied to international security, but for the purposes of this paper domestic security roles for the Reserve Force entail missions and tasks performed within Canada.

This “*Canada first*” posture, and an emphasis on use of the Reserve Force as a domestic resource, competes with the plan to ensure deployed CF Forces are joint and integrated. In fact, the IPS also links the growth in Reserve strength, and a planned increase in Regular Force strength by 5000 personnel, directly to a posture that would permit the deployment of up to 5000 CF members on international operations on a continuous basis.¹² The challenges faced by the CF to improve the current processes that

⁹ Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *Canada’s International Policy Statement – A Role of Pride and Influence in the World – Overview* (Ottawa: n.p.2005), 8.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Department of National Defence, *Canada’s International Policy Statement – A Role of Pride and Influence in the World Defence* (Ottawa: n.p., 2005), 17-20.

¹² *Ibid.*, 3.

will permit the Reserve Force to play a critical expeditionary role by design, and not by chance, is the main consideration.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Reserve Force mobilization and deployment issues are hardly unique to Canada. As part of his study of NATO Reserve forces in the 1990s, Colonel Wallace Walker observed that mobilization of Reservists, and employing them on international operations, can be a very complex and even political decision.¹³ In this context countries such as the United Kingdom and the U.S., with significantly more personnel in the Reserve Force, have developed intricate political and legal systems to manage a military resource that can be employed (and deployed) in a highly visible manner. These countries are also able to draw upon a large base of Reservists to augment deployed units in small numbers to fill gaps, which for Canada has become the de facto standard operating procedure. It should be noted that where there are large Reserve forces and detailed legal avenues to employ them on international operations, as is the case in the U.K. and the U.S., there can be a political resistance to deploy them.¹⁴ Walker refers to the U.S. unwillingness to mobilize National Guard and Reserve troops during the Vietnam War where these troops may have provided critical augmentation, but the U.S. government turned to conscription rather than deployment of a ready resource. Part of this resistance resulted from the impact of ill-designed mobilization plans when Reservists were deployed for the Berlin blockade several years before the Vietnam War. The Kennedy Administration suffered political backlash regarding the appropriateness of that deployment as Reservists were generally under-utilized. It clearly had an effect on

¹³ Wallace Earl Walker, *Reserve Forces and the British Territorial Army* (London: Tri-Service Press, 1990), 159-60.

the Johnson Administration when it came time to decide whether Reserve Forces should be committed to Vietnam.¹⁵ Similarly, the British refrained from deploying Reserve Forces during the Falklands War, despite the fact that they could have eased the significant strain on the Regular Forces.¹⁶

The U.K. and the U.S. have both made great strides in their approach to the use of Reserve Forces in international operations. A 2003 British MOD report emphasizes the strategic-level planning that was conducted to ensure the participation of the Reserves in major operations (including Operation Iraqi Freedom) stating in part:

Their successful employment demonstrated that the vision in the Strategic Defence Review for more integrated, relevant and useable Reserve forces to provide additional capability in time of crisis has been realized.¹⁷

In addition, the U.K. Reserve Forces Act of 1996 was recognized as a solid foundation for the ability to deploy Reserve Forces in Iraq.¹⁸ Many lessons are being learned within the context of this large-scale mobilization, including the ability to sustain it with follow-on forces. This Act is not considered a panacea, and it is under review to improve upon various aspects of personnel support.¹⁹ As can be expected, the U.S. also learned many valuable lessons from the deployment of Reserve Forces in Operation Iraqi Freedom. One key observation was made by Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld in 2003, when he stated, “the balance of capabilities in the Active and Reserve components today is not the

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.* Walker also points out that the unwillingness to deploy distinct Reserve Forces was due to the international political message delivered when using Reserves, referring to it as a provocative act, effectively demonstrating the high readiness of a national military resource to the international community.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Canadian Forces College, “Operations in Iraq – Lessons for the Future” (Advanced Military Studies Programme 9 Activity Package A/DS 552/SUS/LD-1, 2006), 5/10.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

best for the future.”²⁰ This high level of attention is of course due to the large number of U.S. Reservists committed to operations in Iraq, but it also reflects a government (and by implication, a military) willingness to address the important issue of Reserve mobilization in a formal strategic manner.

THE CURRENT CONTEXT

Despite a “*Canada first*” approach and the two strategic imperatives of homeland and continental defence, the government fully intends to continue to meet international military obligations, particularly in failed and failing states.²¹ The significant CF commitment to Afghanistan and the presence of military personnel in numerous other operations around the world is clear evidence that the government is not retrenching the requirement to participate in international operations. The primacy of domestic operations belies a CF focus on expeditionary operations, and it potentially inhibits the recognition that Reserve augmentation of deployed forces is an area requiring significantly more attention.

The IPS points out that the operational tempo for the CF since 1980 has increased despite a corresponding decrease in the strength of the CF.²² It also notes that in May 2004, Canada was second among NATO nations with respect to the percentage of personnel deployed on multinational operations and ranked sixth overall in terms of total numbers.²³ According to Canadian Expeditionary Force Command (CEFCOM) statistics, more than 3,000 Canadian Forces personnel were deployed on international

²⁰ Canadian Forces College, “On Point – The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom” (Advanced Military Studies Programme 9 Activity Package A/DS 552/SUS/LD-1, 2006), 19/22

²¹ *Canada’s International Policy Statement* . . . ,6.

²² *Canada’s International Policy Statement – Defence*, 7.

²³ *Ibid.*

operations in September 2006, with the majority (more than 2300) committed to operations in Afghanistan.²⁴ Of note, there are approximately 8,000 CF members dedicated to the cycle of pre-deployment, deployment, or post-deployment on any given day.²⁵

The September 2006 announcement that troops in Afghanistan would be augmented with additional combat capabilities illustrates the dynamic nature of deployed operations.²⁶ This type of deployment is a far cry from the relatively stable personnel requirements encountered during successive rotations of established peacekeeping missions pre-9/11, and it offers a timely opportunity to make critical decisions about the expeditionary capabilities of the Reserve Force.

The global environment shows no indications that stability is around the corner. As of September 2006 there were 76 distinct armed conflicts, and in excess of 300 armed non-state groups active around the world.²⁷ It is a fair assumption that this global instability will see Canada remain engaged in international operations as a means of mitigating regional tensions:

To this end, the Government will pursue an integrated strategy that draws on Canada's diplomatic, development and defence resources. This includes a central role for the Canadian Forces.²⁸

²⁴ Canada, Department of National Defence, "Canadian Expeditionary Force Command," http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/operations/current_ops_e.asp; Internet; accessed 29 September 2006.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, News World Press Conference Ottawa,; General Hillier, the Canadian Forces Chief of Defence Staff, announced the decision to send Leopard tanks, infantry, and engineers to enhance the combat capability of Canadian troops operating in Kandahar, Afghanistan: 15 September 2006.

²⁷ International Institute for Strategic Studies, "Armed Conflict Database," http://acd.iiss.org/armedconflict/MainPages/dsp_nsagList.asp; Internet; accessed 20 September 2006.

²⁸ *Canada's International Policy Statement - Defence*, 6.

While the commitment of the Government in the pursuit of global stability is a reflection of Canadian values combined with a vested interest in world peace, there are consistent and imposing challenges faced by the CF in trying to meet the demands with a standing force structure that is not established in sufficient numbers to maintain continuing cycles of international operations. In September 2005 the Regular Force stood at 61, 463 personnel, with a trained effective strength of 53,423.²⁹ Approximately half of the effective strength is available for deployment, and for every soldier on deployment there is one getting ready, and another who has recently returned home and will not be available for international operations for at least one year.³⁰ The government is not blind to this issue and it notes that:

The number of personnel deployed on foreign operations has frequently exceeded the sustainable ceiling of 4,000 set in the 1994 Defence White Paper. At the same time, it was not anticipated that the Canadian Forces would so often deploy simultaneously and for lengthy periods to so many theatres around the globe.³¹

The CF expansion by 5000 Regular and 3000 Reserve personnel was designed “...to improve the ability to carry out the domestic, continental, and international roles....”³² With this expansion it is incumbent upon the CF to ensure all mechanisms are in place to utilize every resource, particularly Reserve personnel, to maximum effect. The absence of clear pan-Reserve activation/mobilization planning constitutes a large gap in the perceived capability of the CF to sustain deployed operations with any certainty. All three environments have their internal plans to capitalize on Reserve augmentation, but the strategic focus to ensure optimal effect can be achieved under the right conditions.

²⁹ House of Commons, Standing Committee on National Security and Defence, *Wounded - Canada's Military and the Legacy of Neglect* (Ottawa: n.p., 2005), 189.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

³¹ *Canada's International Policy Statement – Defence*, 8.

³² *Ibid.*, 3.

The CF is striving for a truly joint and unified force, and the establishment of new operational commands goes a long way to achieve the measure of “*jointness*” required to make the military effective in a manner that represents more than the sum of its parts. The Canadian Expeditionary Forces Command, Canada Command, Canadian Operational Support Command, and the Special Operations Forces Command are the means to achieve a joint force at the operational level. Although this is a move towards a more unified command and control structure, it does not, in and of itself, help resolve the personnel issues, or the corresponding CF challenges facing the planning and coordination of the deployment capacity of the Reserve Force in a similarly unified manner.

Each of the distinctive environments manages Reserve issues such as recruiting, employment, and training in a manner that is unique to the Reserve Force, and unique to each environment. Before examining the “*whole*” it is useful to look at each of the “*parts*.” The range of challenges experienced by each environment help illustrate why strategic direction is a linchpin in the goal to maintain a relevant, responsive, and effective military resource as Canada meets its international commitments.

THE NAVY RESERVES

The Navy Reserve is comprised of approximately 4,000 personnel employed across twenty-four Naval Reserve Divisions (NRD) within Canada.³³ The Navy has established definitive roles for their Reservists, with a view to employing them to maximum effect within the total Navy construct. The Navy Reserve focuses its efforts on

³³ Canada, Department of National Defence, “Canadian Navy – The Naval Reserve,” http://www.navy.forces.gc.ca/navres/home/navres_home_e.asp?category=4 ; Internet; accessed 1 October 2006.

domestic tasks, as detailed in *Leadmark*, the keystone document guiding the Navy into the future:

The naval reserve does not exist solely as a basis for mobilisation. Instead, its value is in the assignment to it of specified tasks within the Total Force, such as port security, naval control of shipping (NCS), manning the *Kingston* class ships, and supplementing MCM [Mine Counter-Measure] detachments. These are activities that can be maintained in peacetime to allow rapid augmentation of the navy by trained personnel at short notice when needed to address any of a wide range of crises.³⁴

This critical domestic role does not allow for widespread participation in international operations, although Maritime Coastal Defence Vessels (MCDVs) have participated in NATO exercises outside Canada, and would presumably be able to do so if called upon to deploy overseas. The MCDVs are manned by full-time Reservists, which limits the pool of Class A personnel, but it does not obviate the need for strategic direction to manage the resource to maximum effect. Although the Navy approach is not designed to directly utilize Reservists as augmentation for the Regular Force in international operations, the strategy enables Navy Reserve personnel to develop specialist skills so they can perform domestic roles that then permit the Regular Force to focus on training for expeditionary employment.³⁵ These specialist skills utilized in a domestic role are no less important when considered within an expeditionary context, but there is currently no mechanism in place to validate whether it is feasible to manage the resource beyond environmental requirements.

In a broader sense though, outside the NRD structure, a cursory analysis indicates that Navy Reservists are able to contribute to international operations in the form of

³⁴ Canada, Department of National Defence, “Leadmark – The Navy’s Strategy for 2020,” http://www.navy.dnd.ca/leadmark/doc/index_e.asp; Internet; accessed 29 September 2006.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

individual augmentation. Personnel in occupations common to all three environments are utilized for domestic and international employment; from Supply Technicians, to Administration Clerks, to Officers with staff qualifications. Many of these personnel seek out deployment opportunities and participate in international operations, but due to the domestic nature of the missions and tasks assigned to the Navy Reserve, it is usually at the initiative of the individual member.³⁶ The Navy Reserve's force generation focus is not oriented towards a mobilization base, which entails a risk that a portion of this trained personnel resource becomes transparent to the greater, deployable CF. This "stove-pipe" is not self-imposed, it is merely a status quo resulting from the lack of a coordinating authority to link environmental Reserve Force generation and capacity, to strategic requirements and the expeditionary force employers.

THE ARMY RESERVES

The role of the Army Reserve is to "...provide the framework for mobilization, the Army's connection with Canadians, and augmentation within the Canadian Forces."³⁷ The Army Reserve is the largest amongst the Reserve environments, comprising almost 17,000 personnel.³⁸ As the Army transforms with the remainder of the CF, its most significant challenge appears to lie in the area of personnel availability. A previous Chief of the Land Staff (CLS) testified to a Senate Committee of the "Hollow Army" in terms of usable personnel to accomplish assigned missions and tasks.³⁹

³⁶ During the author's deployment to the Canadian Joint Task Force Southwest Asia in Tampa in 2003, Navy Reserve personnel served as Administration Clerks and as members of the joint staff, having requested deployment opportunities from their employing unit.

³⁷ Canada, Department of National Defence, "Land Force Reserve Restructure Master Implementation Plan Phase 2 Ottawa 18 November 2003," http://www.army.forces.gc.ca/lf/Downloads/Main_Document.rtf#_The_Role_of; Internet; accessed 28 September 2006.

³⁸ *Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves*, 1995: Ten Years Later, 9.

³⁹ *Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, Wounded.*, 28.

A subsequent Senate report entitled “*Wounded – Canada’s Military and the Legacy of Neglect*” equated the high operational tempo in the Army to “...punching above our weight.”⁴⁰ The report goes on to address the issue of capacity for international operations by concluding: “We are asking them [the Army] to make up names, like ‘managed readiness’ and to say that things will be predictably deployable.”⁴¹

Despite the “*hollowness*” described by the former CLS, the Army plans to be able to sustain two lines of operation in international operations, each composed of 1,500 person Battle Groups.⁴² This would appear to fully consume the planned growth in Regular and Reserve Force personnel, without even considering the requirement to maintain domestic commitments. The planned focus of Reserve personnel on domestic roles adds to the questionability of the Army to maintain overseas force strengths. In fact, during a CLS presentation to Senior Army Leadership, the generation of Regular Forces for expeditionary operations was briefed with the caveat that it would be augmented by Reserve Forces.⁴³ Historically the Army has deployed battle groups with up to twenty-percent Reserve personnel in order to be able to retain a true operational reserve capacity at home because there are insufficient Regular Force members to do so otherwise.

A *Minister’s Monitoring Committee on Change* report in 2003 summarized recommendations from a *Land Force Reserve Restructure* report of the same year, and specifically addressed the issue of mobilization by stating:

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁴² Canada, Department of National Defence, “Chief of the Land Staff - Future Army Capabilities and Force Structure”, presentation to Army Senior Leadership Forum, 9 September 2006. PowerPoint presentation provided by LCol Bernie Derbach, J1 Reserves, Canada Command, 17 September 2006.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

To make the case that it would be "prudent" to have a "no-cost" plan for national mobilization is not difficult...[q]uite apart from the fact that it was directed by policy, there are sound military reasons for undertaking conceptual work on the fourth stage of mobilization. Given that the current Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff target for Reserve participation is 10-20% of deployed forces, the Committee remains concerned...by reports that the CF possesses no capacity for a "surge" induction of Reservists.⁴⁴

This is not to say that the Army has not been effective in generating Reservists; between 1996 and 2004, 4,976 Army Reservists deployed on international operations.⁴⁵ This is a success story, but much of the story occurs in a pre-9/11 environment during the frequent rotations into Bosnia where Army Reserve units performed admirably in providing troops for composite sections, platoons, and companies to augment the Regular Force.⁴⁶ As seen in the high-intensity operations in Afghanistan, troops are exposed to a much different set of conditions. The skill sets required by Army personnel have increased to the extent that pre-deployment activities have increased from three-to-four months required to go to the Former Yugoslavia, to as many as thirteen months worth of training to qualify for service in Afghanistan. This changing environment is potentially creating a cadre of "one-shot" Reservists who may not be capable of (or prepared to) deploying on a cyclical rotation schedule, as is done with their Regular Force counterparts. It was only as recently as November 2003 when the CLS signed off on a plan to migrate Army Reserve missions and tasks to the Canadian Forces Tasks, Plans, and Operations (CFTPO) software. This program is a tool, not a centralized plan, and it is not used to any great extent outside the Army. In effect, the Army is struggling with personnel

⁴⁴ Canada, Department of National Defence, "Minister's Monitoring Committee on Change - Final Report, 2003," http://www.dnd.ca/site/Reports/mmcc/final_report_e.asp; Internet; accessed 19 October 2006.

⁴⁵ *Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves*, 1995: Ten Years Later, 5.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

issues at all levels, Regular and Reserve, domestic and international. The challenge lies in moving beyond the environmental “*stove-pipes*” to manage the limited Reserve personnel resource, using whatever tools are available, but with the proper strategic direction to prevent unnecessary “*wheel-spinning*” as the CF struggles to operate in a truly joint and unified manner, especially within the complex expeditionary context.

THE AIR RESERVE

The Air Reserve employs approximately 2,600 personnel who are integrated directly into Air Force units.⁴⁷ They are dedicated to providing:

...support to the Air Force in ongoing peacetime tasks as well as deployed operations. The Air Reserve also serves as a basis for national mobilization and acts as a military link to the community.⁴⁸

A significant number of Air Reservists are members with former Regular Force service, often with many years of service prior to joining the Reserves.⁴⁹ This employment construct appears to imply that the ability to deploy Air Reservists is comparable to the Regular Force. Notwithstanding unique Reserve terms of service, the Air Force has historically only asked for Air Reserve participation in international operations when Regular Force shortfalls required it. As with the Army, the Air Force has experienced a high operational tempo post-9/11, with many transport and personnel resources focused on the support of CF operations in Southwest Asia. Comprising almost 18% of the

⁴⁷ Canada, Department of National Defence, “Air Force,” http://www.airforce.forces.gc.ca/today5_e.asp; Internet; accessed 3 October 2006.

⁴⁸ Canada, Department of National Defence, “Air Reserve: General Information,” http://www.airforce.forces.gc.ca/air_reserve/general_info/general_info_e.asp; Internet; accessed 1 October 2006.

⁴⁹ Due to the comprehensive skills required by aircrew and air technicians, the Air Reserves creates funding and training efficiencies by recruiting members in these occupations who are leaving the Regular Air Force. In addition, the Air Reserves employs personnel who are directly embedded in Regular Force units, which makes it difficult for many people to adjust around the schooling or work commitments that are more suited to the evening and weekend training periods utilized by the Navy and Army Reserves.

Regular Air Force, the Air Reserves are a highly visible resource.⁵⁰ As a result, the Air Force is quickly recognizing the need to provide a balanced tasking approach, encouraging all Wings to solicit Reserve participation in operations in conjunction with Regular Force members. The development of the Mission Support Squadron concept is using the capabilities offered by the Reserves in recognition of the fact that the Regular Force is not manned or structured with enough depth to manage the potential proliferation of deployment requirements.⁵¹

The Air Reserve has also contributed many personnel to CF deployments in an augmentation capacity. In 2004-2005, ninety-seven Air Reserve personnel deployed on international operations, and in 2005-2006 thirty-five members served on overseas missions.⁵² There is no statistical analysis available to explain the decrease in deployed Air Reservists, but the information itself illustrates the dynamic nature of Reserve expeditionary capabilities and reinforces the need for “extra-service” attention in the form of strategic direction.

Notwithstanding the variable deployment capability, the Air Reserve has demonstrated the capacity to be highly responsive to international requirements. One such example is the Airfield Engineering Squadron (AES), with Flights located in British Columbia, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador. The Squadron received an extremely short notice tasking to deploy construction personnel to Kandahar after a CF decision to augment the force in Afghanistan in late 2006. Sixteen personnel were

⁵⁰ “Air Force,” http://www.airforce.forces.gc.ca/today5_e.asp - accessed 3 October 2006

⁵¹ The Mission Support Squadron (MSS) is an initiative of the Air Force Support Capability Project to provide highly deployable Regular and Reserve support personnel that train and function as a cohesive team. This high state of readiness permits short notice deployment of personnel in support of Air Force tasks and missions.

⁵² Canada, Department of National Defence, “Air Reserve Annual Report FY 2005/2006,” http://airforce.mil.ca/airres/subjects/keydocs/keydocs_e.htm#R; Internet; accessed 4 October 2006.

identified and prepared to deploy as of 16 September 2006 to complete short-term mission critical engineering tasks in support of the Army mission.⁵³ This success is predicated on the knowledge that such capabilities exist; in this case the AES has been called upon to complete engineering tasks for many international operations, which has elevated their reputation at the strategic level. Such methods of identifying Reserve capabilities are certainly not ideal, especially as it would be unrealistic to rely on anecdotal experience to capitalize on the full spectrum of Reserve potential.

Even within the Air Force itself, not all capabilities are addressed at the appropriate level. A 2006 Air Reserve Working Group addressed the notional possibility of gaining 1,000 new positions in the Air Force as part of the CF expansion of the Reserves. This working group was held at the operational level, focusing on how the Air Reserve could best absorb new positions at the tactical level.⁵⁴ Although this example pertains to an intra-Air Force generation issue, the greater CF Reserve requirement could have been considered. The presence of strategic-level direction and planning guidance may have been able to play a role in the working group's areas of consideration, such as a potential need for an increased Airfield Engineer capability to support deployed Army operations. Purely environmental considerations can no longer drive the generation of forces in a joint and unified environment.

SPECIALIST RESERVE ORGANIZATIONS

⁵³ Major Kelly Harvey, Commanding Officer 14 Airfield Engineering Squadron, E-mail provided to the author, 18 September 2006.

⁵⁴ The author participated in the quarterly Air Reserve Senior Staff Working Group, held at 1 Canadian Air Division Headquarters in Winnipeg, Manitoba in April 2006. Key Air Division Reserve Staff Officers presented recommendations regarding potential employment options within an expanded Air Reserve. The recommendations were compiled and forwarded to DG Air Reserves for consideration at the strategic level. No formal report was produced as this was considered to be a "brain storming" session.

The Communication Reserve, the Health Services Reserve, along with small miscellaneous occupations, such as Legal Officer and Chaplain, comprise approximately 2,927 Reserve personnel available to the CF. This is a major source of specialists that enhances the total military capability. The Communication Reserve is comprised of 2,038 personnel organized under five Communications Groups across Canada to provide signals support to the Regular Force Army.⁵⁵ The Health Services Reserve is approximately 788 members strong, distributed amongst 14 Reserve Field Ambulance units, providing medical support to the Army, and backfilling vacancies created by deployed Regular Force members.⁵⁶ These organizations are very Army-centric and the ten year update to the 1995 report of the *Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves* has even recommended that they should be placed under Army command along with the remainder of the Reserves serving in the Land environment.⁵⁷

The other miscellaneous Reserve occupations such as Legal Officer and Chaplain are not managed through environmental command and control, but rather through their affiliation with their Regular Force occupational counterparts. These organizations do not receive significant attention in the broader context of the Reserve Force, but as skilled specialists they would be well served by strategic coordination and planning to optimize their capability to participate in international operations across all CF environments.

JOINT ISSUES

Apart from the specific concerns of individual environments within the CF, other common challenges abound. An issue that has represented an almost steady-state posture

⁵⁵ Canada. Department of National Defence, *Chief of the Defence Staff. CDS Action Team 1 Report. Part V. – Reserve Force Command and Control Structure* (Ottawa: n.p., n.d.), 3.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵⁷ *Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves, 1995: Ten Years Later.*, 36.

for the CF in the early 21st century is the extensive use of Reservists to fill headquarters staff positions at the strategic and operational levels. NDHQ has capitalized on the use of full and part-time Reservists to fill numerous positions left vacant during the turbulent CF transformation process. In addition to the use of Reservists within NDHQ, all environments have contributed Reservists to serve in the six Regional Joint Task Force (RJTF) Headquarters, the Regional Air Control Elements, the Land Force Area Headquarters', and the Air Warfare Centre, amongst other operational-level organizations. This has essentially stripped many key Reservists away from duties at their home unit, which often includes the key task of generating Reserve Force personnel to augment international operations.

In addition to the headquarters employment opportunities, all Reserve environments are spending a significant amount of administrative time coordinating requests for Reservists to work on short-term projects, exercises, backfill for parental leave of Regular Force members, and backfill for positions vacated as a result of deployments. The issue causes problems when measuring CF deployment capacity as these personnel leave their normal Reserve positions and are not correspondingly backfilled for short duration vacancies. The capability becomes difficult to measure because these Reservists continue to be counted when determining Force levels, but they are effectively "*deployed*" to augment the Regular Force and are not available to augment international operations. It is therefore crucial to implement strategic direction before the environmental "*damage-control*" solution of using contract Reservists removes any hope of generating personnel for the priority Reserve missions and tasks – including augmentation of international operations. There is certainly a need to address the issue of

how many full-time Reservists can be utilized before diminishing the capabilities attributed to the primary Reserve roles within the CF, which could form the basis of another study.

The current system used to fill positions for any operation is ostensibly the Canadian Forces Tasks, Plans, and Operation (CFTPO) software. One key limitation of the system is that it is used primarily by the Army in a relatively isolated manner. Progress within the environments towards CF-wide use of the system is slow. For example, the Theatre Support Element in the Arabian Gulf is an Air Force generated unit; therefore vacancies are filled when 1 Canadian Air Division Headquarters assigns responsibility to fill vacant positions to the various Air Force Wings. If a Wing indicates it cannot fill a position, it is expected to provide a reason, and the position is then sourced from another Air Force unit – there is no concurrent search for personnel outside of the Air Force. Only recently were Air Reservists even considered in the first round of solicitations within a total Air Force approach to manning in all tasking areas, both domestic and international. The CFTPO is capable of functioning as a useful CF-wide tasking tool, but the environmental “*stove-pipes*” must be disbanded. This compartmented approach does not permit the effective planning, tasking, and employment of Reserve personnel at the strategic level. Reservists of common occupations, such as logistics and communications trades, are qualified to perform duties across all environments, and their value to the greater CF could be better exploited within a coherent strategic process to provide pan-military visibility.

OTHER FACTORS AND CONSIDERATIONS

In the realm of Reserve Forces, many factors create friction that would not necessarily impact the Regular Force. Issues such as job protection legislation, active service regulations, and the ability to predict commitment from a part-time force are all topics that justify further study, and for which many studies already exist.

In the midst of transforming the CF command and control structure, significant increases in the defence budget, and growth of at least 8,000 personnel beyond current manning levels, it is time to examine this critical Reserve issue in a strategic and joint manner.

The CDS Action Team assigned to review Reserve command and control issues has identified the need to rationalize and align the Reserve Force with the Regular component.⁵⁸ What cannot be omitted is the need to provide focused and dedicated strategic-level direction regarding Reserve Force capabilities to ensure that execution at the operational level is uncompromised as the CF projects power abroad. The CF will most likely never develop a Reserve Force capacity of the magnitude of the U.K. or the U.S., where formed units can train and fight and be utilized as a classic reserve, deploying when necessary to augment the Regular Force. In the context of a CF personnel capacity for the foreseeable future, it is therefore critical that the military take the necessary measures to ensure that maximum efficiency counter-balances the lack of significant resources.

The *Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves* re-emphasized one recommendation relating to the deployment capacity of Reservists in the ten year update of its 1995 report. It calls for development of Stage Four mobilization plans as part of greater CF joint doctrine.⁵⁹ This recommendation certainly advances the idea that more

⁵⁸ *CDS Action Team 1 Report.*, 1.

⁵⁹ *Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves, 1995: Ten Years Later.*, 36.

planning is required, but it does not place the recommendations in the context of a renewed and transformed CF, operating under joint operational commands, supported by the three environments. It is focused on doctrine, which is important to any military, but as a body of principles to be used as a guide – it is not a panacea to solve the dynamic challenges of issues such as Reserve deployment capabilities.

SUMMARY

Based on the observations contained in this study, the CF must take the necessary steps to develop a process that will provide strategic joint direction to unify national and environmental plans for the use of Reserve personnel in international operations. A relatively small military force within a country possessing strong political will to project those forces outside the country in the name of international stability, are conditions very unsuited to a lack of coherent joint mobilization/activation plans for the Reserve Force. Since 1947, the CF has completed 72 international operations, not including the 17 operations currently ongoing.⁶⁰ The international operations tempo shows no sign of relenting. Without strategic direction originating from the CDS to address the complex issues regarding the place of Canada's Reserve Forces within the deployable CF, there will undoubtedly be a point where crisis management and ad hoc processes permanently supplant the planning process that should have been deliberate from the start. Ad hoc planning cannot survive based on hope and sheer will, especially as the CF continues to rotate troops into Afghanistan, increase domestic capabilities, and plan for scenarios that could see a large number of personnel deployed on a long-term basis.

⁶⁰ "Canadian Expeditionary Force Command," http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/operations/current_ops_e.asp; Internet; accessed 29 September 2006.

CONCLUSION

This paper has demonstrated the many complexities surrounding the mobilization/activation of the Reserve Force, and it has also illustrated the many effective ways the Army, Navy, and Air Force have addressed individual service needs, with little overlap or formal coordination to maximize the Reserve capacity to augment the Regular Force on international operations. No clear “*one-stop shopping*” solution may be possible, but a strategic framework to address mobilization/activation planning and coordination would be a key enabler to address this specific challenge facing the CF.

As the CF takes stock of a myriad of organizational concerns in this era of *Transformation*, it may appear difficult to concurrently address a seemingly endless list of competing priorities. Perhaps it is precisely the right time to directly scrutinize the deployable capacity of our Reserve Forces, and move forward with relevant mobilization/activation plans and processes. Based upon the observations contained in this study, it is recommended that the CF create a CDS-empowered organization to focus on the expeditionary capability and challenges of the Reserve Force as a key first step towards true “*managed readiness*” at the highest level. The detailed make-up of this organization is left to further study, but it must be authorized to take forward-looking, positive actions that are relevant to each environment, the new operational command structure, the global security environment, and the current and future capacity of the Reserves. Consonance with all Reserve roles is required, therefore the mandate of this staff may extend beyond mobilization/activation planning, but the CF clearly requires immediate action at the appropriate level to address the particular issue of Reserve participation in international operations. The CF is awash in lessons learned and best

practices; therefore, if nothing else, there should be a focused realization that good planning, above all else, will ensure the continued effectiveness of the Reserve Force in a totally integrated, unified, and joint Canadian Forces.

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