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CANADA'S ARMY RESERVE IN A LEAD ROLE WITHIN A WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO DOMESTIC OPERATIONS

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Exercise Solo Flight

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EXERCISE *SOLO FLIGHT* – EXERCICE *SOLO FLIGHT*

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CANADA'S ARMY RESERVE IN A LEAD ROLE WITHIN A WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO DOMESTIC OPERATIONS

As we become more and more savvy about how to conduct the comprehensive approach in operations where we take a broad range of military and civil effects, many Reservists have those skill sets because of the dual nature of their professional lives to enrich further our capability set.

- General Jonathan Vance, *Answering the Call: The Future Role of Canada's Primary Reserve*

Introduction

The Reserve Force is a vital component of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). There are currently four components of the Canadian Reserves; Supplementary Reserve, Canadian Rangers, Primary Reserve, and the Cadet Organization Administration and Training Service. The Primary Reserves represents the largest component with a paid strength in 2011 of 27,000, with 18,850 of those in the Army Reserve (roughly 70%).¹ The Primary Reserves include the Army, Air, Naval, Health Services and Judge Advocate General Legal Reserves.

A 1994 Defence white paper described the Reserves as “a national institution providing a vital link between the Canadian Forces and local communities. Their primary role will be the augmentation, sustainment, and support of deployed forces.”² More recently, the Director General of Land Reserves identified the core functions of the Reserves as:

1. Augmentation of the Regular Force on operations;

¹House of Commons, Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *Answering the Call: The Future Role of Canada's Primary Reserve*, no. 1, October 17, 2011, 13.

²Department of National Defence, “*The Reserve Force and Reserve Classes of Service*,” Last accessed 20 April 2015, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/news/article.page?doc=the-reserve-force-and-reserve-classes-of-service/hnmx1bib>.

2. Expansion of the CAF in response to natural and man-made emergencies and crises; and,
3. Connection between the CAF and Canadian society.³

In terms of augmentation to deployed operations, the participation of the Reserves has been an unqualified success; since 1992 over 17,000 Reservists have contributed to overseas operations, including over 4,000 in Afghanistan.⁴ The “expansion” or “activation” role combines the concepts of large-scale mobilization for conflicts on a global scale, as was the case with the World Wars, and domestic operations. The continued requirement to prepare for large-scale mobilization in future conflicts has been a point of strong debate; however, the requirement to potentially deploy large numbers of reservists on domestic operations is universally accepted. The role of connecting with Canadians is tailor-made for the Reserves given their presence across Canada in both rural and urban communities; Canada’s Army Reserve is represented by 143 units dispersed across 177 cities and communities.

The presence of Reservists in across every province and territory in Canada provides a substantial baseline of personnel and equipment resources that in many cases would be in close proximity to areas where military involvement is required. Reservists have been significant contributors to previous domestic operations, including:

- Support to the 2010 Vancouver Olympics;
- Security at the G8 and G20 summits;

³Dan Doran, “Redefining the Army Reserves for the 21st Century,” *Canadian Military Journal* 13, no. 2 (Spring 2013): 74.

⁴Department of National Defence, Canadian Expeditionary Forces Command, *Canadian Reserves on Operations*, 2011.

- Flood relief in Quebec and Manitoba;
- Ice storms in eastern Canada;
- Fighting forest fires in Alberta and British Columbia; and,
- Hurricane relief efforts in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Despite the apparent advantages of the presence of Reservists across Canada with respect to force generation for domestic operations, their unique skill sets are underappreciated by the CAF and represent a vastly under-utilized resource. According to the Department of National Defence, Reserve Force employment concepts including Territorial Battalion Groups (TBGs), Domestic Response Companies (DRCs) and Arctic Response Company Groups (ARCGs) represent “nascent capabilities” that will enable the Army Reserve to assume the lead in domestic operations.⁵ The Army Reserve should be the lead for CAF in domestic operations; however, force employment concepts are only one parameter in the greater equation. The Army should leverage inherent yet underused Reservist capabilities, and both collective and individual training and personnel selection should place greater emphasis on domestic operations. This paper will review the decisive factors to enable the Army Reserve to effectively assume the lead role in domestic operations.

Considerations for Continued Transformation of the Army Reserves

The Reserves assuming a lead role in domestic operations is not a new idea; in the late 1950s the Minister of National Defence (George Pearkes) proposed the Army Reserve assume the primary role of restoring order and search and rescue operations in

⁵Department of National Defence, “*Department of National Defence – Reports on Plans and Priorities 2013-14*,” Last accessed 20 April 2015, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/about-reports-pubs-report-plan-priorities/2013-other-reports-plans-priorities.page>.

the event of nuclear attack on Canada.⁶ In his recommendations on Army transformation, General Andrew Leslie recommended the Army Reserve focus on force generation for domestic operations with the Regular Force in support.⁷

Organizational Structure and Culture. The CAF must continue in its transformation to the concept of a true “Total Force”. Prior to the 1990s, the Reserve Force was considered a partially trained or second-class force.⁸ In the mid-1990s, Army Reserve and Regular Army relations were described as “bitter.”⁹

In the late 1990s, the Navy and Air Force began to function more effectively as Total Force Commands, compared to the Army where senior leadership appeared “reluctant” to accept the broad ramifications of Total Force.¹⁰ In the interim, the Air and Naval Reserves have made a more successful transition to the concept of Total Force. The Air Reserve is “an integral part of the Total Air Force” and most reserve units have been consolidated with the Regular Force into integrated units.¹¹ The Air Reserve is fully integrated into the RCAF and NORAD operations in patrolling air approaches to Canada, and acts more like an auxiliary force rather than providing a capability in reserve.¹² Three RCAF squadrons are “reserve-heavy” and have Reserve Commanding Officers. Maritime coastal defence is an operational capability that lies with the Naval Reserve, which mans

⁶Jack English, *The Role of the Militia in Today's Canadian Forces* (Calgary: Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute and Canadian International Council, 2011), 12.

⁷*Ibid.*, 20.

⁸Major-General Dennis Tabbernor, “Reserves on Operations,” *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 12, no. 4 (Summer 2010): 44.

⁹J. L. Granatstein and LGeneral (Ret'd) Charles Belzile, *The Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves, 1995: Ten Years Later* (University of Calgary: Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute and the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies, 2005), 7.

¹⁰Library of Parliament, Political and Social Affairs Division, *The Canadian Armed Forces: The Role of the Reserves*, November, 1999, 15.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 13.

¹²Tabbernor, *Reserves on Operations...*, 46.

Kingston Class ships for coastal operations and Naval Control of Shipping units that provide information and advice on merchant shipping and safe routes. The Naval Reserve is also responsible for standing up and manning Port Security/Harbour Defence units and the new arctic offshore patrol vessels will be manned jointly by the RCN and Naval Reserves.¹³ However, it must also be acknowledged that Naval and Air Force Total Force concepts are built on smaller Reserve contributions for immediate operational and tactical augmentation, while the Army approach continues to be development of main contingent manpower, which is a more personnel-intensive process.¹⁴

Roles including Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) and Psychological Operations (PSYOPs) are now resident within the Army Reserve. The Afghanistan mission has resulted in a better working relationship between the Regular Force and the Reserves, and the past several years have seen a trend toward increasing numbers of soldiers transferring to the Primary Reserves upon completion of their service in the Regular Force. However, the process for transfer continues to be overly administratively burdensome. The concept of the Territorial Defence Battalion (or Territorial Battalion Group, TBG) in the Army Reserve was developed in part for disaster response in domestic operations. However, the TBGs are based on the current Class A model and are merely an organizational concept, rather than a new approach to leveraging the additional professional skill sets of many Reservists.

¹³NATO, "Canada's Reserve Force," Last accessed 21 May 2015, <http://www.nato.int/nrfc/database/canada>.

¹⁴English, *The Role of the Militia in Today's Canadian Forces...*, 9.

The key to adoption of the Total Force concept by the Air Force and Navy was development of “distinct yet complementary roles” within each service.¹⁵ Designating the Army Reserve as the lead for domestic operations would serve the same purpose for the Canadian Army. Dedication of a pre-determined status for the Army Reserve would also provide impetus for commanders to include formed reserve elements in their operational plans.¹⁶ However, in a similar vein, the Army Reserve must do a better job of adopting a culture of deployability if they are to be effective in a lead role.

Canadian Geography. Reservists are located across Canada and in the north through the Canadian Rangers, which are to be expanded as part of Canada’s Northern Strategy.¹⁷ The Reserves have greater cultural and ethnic diversity than the Regular Force and are more reflective of Canadian society; they also have a greater understanding of local communities and traditions.

Another benefit of having the Army Reserve assume the lead role in domestic operations lies in the speed in which they can be deployed. A rapid response to domestic disasters and humanitarian emergencies often requires a “come as you are” approach.¹⁸ Reservists with their broad range of skill sets also provide flexibility. Reservists “are located in the community; they know the situation well and they often are first responders”.¹⁹ However, there is a flaw in the assumption that Reservists would always be the first responders in their own community. During Operation Recuperation, the eastern Ontario and Quebec ice storm in 2008, many local Reservists, police and

¹⁵Library of Parliament, *The Canadian Armed Forces: The Role of the Reserves...*, 24.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁷Tabbemor, *Reserves on Operations...*, 46.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

emergency services were forced to look after their own families, houses and possessions rather than providing a more general first response.

Reserve Terms of Service. Terms of service for Reservists in terms of operational deployments, i.e., the requirements for Reservists deployed on operations to be volunteers, are dramatically different than those of their Regular Force counterparts. Reservists are not obligated to perform continuous full time duty without consent, unless they are placed on active service as a result of an order of the Governor-in-Council in accordance with the National Defence Act. As a result, whether or not the Army Reserves can develop the capability to act as the CAF lead in domestic operations given current attrition rates and terms of service is an important consideration.

Job protection is also an important factor in terms of the ability of Reservists to deploy, even on a domestic operation. The federal government, provinces and one territory have laws that protect the jobs of Reservists on operations, but there is a lack of consistency in the legislation across jurisdictions and greater uniformity is needed.²⁰ In 2006, overall employer support was marginal with only 44% of employers willing to pay a difference in salary between military and civilian pay during Reserve service, and 53% willing to provide unpaid leave for up to 12 months to allow deployment on operations.²¹

Retention and attrition are additional causes for concern in reserve units; they may negatively impact availability of qualified personnel to deploy. The 2014 attrition rate was 13% for 32 Canadian Brigade Group; this formation is the largest Brigade in the 4th Canadian Division, with a strength of 2,100 soldiers. However, this attrition rate is less

²⁰House of Commons, *Answering the Call: The Future Role of Canada's Primary Reserve...*, 39.

²¹NATO, "Canada's Reserve Force," Last accessed 21 May 2015, <http://www.nato.int/nrhc/database/canada>.

than the 25% - 30% annual rates experienced in the late 1990s. Similarly, in the USA sustainability of an operational reserve force in light of low retention and high attrition is reportedly the greatest challenge.²²

In February 2010, 15,000 out of 27,000 Primary Reserve members were on full-time service as a result of participation in operations in Haiti and Afghanistan and the largest-ever domestic operation in support of the Vancouver Olympics.²³ Having over 50% of the Primary Reserve on active service concurrently in 2010 demonstrates the current terms of service would not negatively impact the ability to deploy a strong enough contingent of Reservists on a domestic operation.

Funding and Administration. The Reserves provide some skills and knowledge (doctors, lawyers, etc.) that the Regular Force cannot cost-effectively maintain. The existence of the Air Reserve makes the cost of the entire Air Force affordable.²⁴ Overall, the cost of maintaining a reserve force is reportedly less than that required for a standing regular force.²⁵ The cost of maintaining a full-time Regular Force soldier is 5-times that of a Reservist.²⁶ As a rule of thumb, fielding one Reservist to provide augmentation to the Regular Force has historically required a ratio of 5:1, which is a critical consideration in any assessment of cost effectiveness.²⁷ In 1999, the Primary Reserves represented roughly ten percent of the defence budget.²⁸ Today, National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) is as large as the Army Reserve and between 51% and 57% of the defence

²²House of Commons, *Answering the Call: The Future Role of Canada's Primary Reserve...*, 28.

²³*Ibid.*, 16.

²⁴Library of Parliament, *The Canadian Armed Forces: The Role of the Reserves...*, 13.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 23.

²⁶House of Commons, *Answering the Call: The Future Role of Canada's Primary Reserve...*, 27.

²⁷English, *The Role of the Militia in Today's Canadian Forces...*, 21.

²⁸Library of Parliament, *The Canadian Armed Forces: The Role of the Reserves...*, 23.

budget goes toward personnel costs; mainly to maintain the Regular Force establishment.²⁹

There has been a proposal put forward to establish a Canadian National Leadership Program (CNLP), which is a modern version of the Canadian Officers Training Corps (COTC) that was offered at Canadian universities from 1912 – 1968. The plan would also be to expand the program to include community colleges. Given the number of Reservists that are university graduates, this proposal has merit but with significant economic ramifications. A 50-student pilot project program has been estimated to require an investment of 16 million dollars.³⁰

According to English, the Army Reserve would have to increase to 45,000 personnel to undertake all of the domestic tasks laid out in the Canada First Defence Strategy.³¹ The Army Reserves could assume the lead for domestic operations with much smaller numbers, but in order to build the required capabilities, a greater percentage of the defence budget must be allocated to the Reserves and efficiencies must be found. For example, there is still separation of the administrative systems used for the Reserve and Regular Forces, which can act as a barrier for deploying reservists on operations.³² Efficient administration for Reservists including screening, kitting out and generation of route letters is essential for rapid deployment on domestic operations. However, the current fiscal environment in the federal government is a significant constraint, as the fiscal year 2011-2012 budget called for 5% and 10% budget reductions for all government departments under the Deficit Reduction Action Plan (DRAP).

²⁹English, *The Role of the Militia in Today's Canadian Forces...*, 3.

³⁰House of Commons, *Answering the Call: The Future Role of Canada's Primary Reserve...*, 35.

³¹English, *The Role of the Militia in Today's Canadian Forces...*, 33.

³²House of Commons, *Answering the Call: The Future Role of Canada's Primary Reserve...*, 48.

Training, Capability Development and Leveraging of Professional Skill Sets. The 2005 Defence Policy Statement placed greater emphasis on the defence of Canada and North America. According to the Defence Strategy 2020 guidance, the requirement to develop a domestic capability is an “attribute” and ensuring that capability to respond to domestic crises is the “strategic direction.”³³ Building of domestic operational capability requires multi-skilled people in both a full- and part-time capacity.³⁴

The presence of Reservists in communities across Canada and their combination of military and civilian professional skills make them better candidates for specialized tasks for domestic operations than their Regular Force counterparts.³⁵ Richard Weitz, testifying before the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence stated that “what we are seeing today...is a global revolution in how countries are dealing with Reserve affairs ... generally, what we are seeing is more reliance on the Reserves.”³⁶ Former Minister of National Defence David Pratt advocated assignment of new roles for the Reserves with respect to domestic operations, e.g., cyber defence.³⁷ The cyber world represents a strategically important environment requiring knowledge of complex technologies and techniques; there are a considerable number of Reservists that have acquired advanced degrees in relevant fields such as computer science.

Key recommendations from the Report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence relevant to the role of the Reserves in domestic operations include:

³³Department of National Defence, *Shaping the Future of the Canadian Forces: A Strategy for 2020* (Ottawa: Canada Communications Group, 1999), 29.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 12.

³⁵English, *The Role of the Militia in Today's Canadian Forces...*, 3.

³⁶House of Commons, *Answering the Call: The Future Role of Canada's Primary Reserve...*, 23.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 27.

- Operational tasks and measurable readiness benchmarks are required for the Reserves; this is as relevant to domestic operations as for overseas operations;
- A critical mass of reservists should maintain a readiness level commensurate with that of the Regular Force as a means to ensure deployment readiness; and,
- Reservists should be employed in specialized roles including cyber defence and anti-terrorism, including the use of the Health Services Reserves model where personnel serve for full-time periods under contract.³⁸

The Health Services model, and those of the Legal and Public Affairs Reserves and the Chaplains have shown how civilian professional skills can translate to the military. However, the Health Services Reserve has shared the same difficulties as their Regular Force counterparts, in that there is a shortage of qualified personnel; an effect that is exacerbated by increasing numbers of callouts to meet operational and training requirements.

There are a host of potential roles for the Reserves on domestic operations including earthquake relief, search and rescue, infrastructure protection and assisting with major chemical spills.³⁹ However, the “Army falls short with respect to properly leveraging the innumerable complementary skills of its Reserve members associated with their civilian jobs.”⁴⁰ Although some professional qualifications may be reflected on a member’s Military Personnel Record Resume (MPRR), they are typically not considered in selection for operational taskings. The value of civilian skill sets was highlighted during Operation Recuperation where the Officer Commanding A Company of 31

³⁸*Ibid.*, 62.

³⁹English, *The Role of the Militia in Today’s Canadian Forces...*, 38.

⁴⁰Doran, *Redefining the Army Reserves for the 21st Century...*, 75.

Canadian Brigade Group structured his organization according to professional skills, including tradesmen and those with experience in dealing with the public. Operational tasks were then tailored to individual platoons based on their collective expertise.

Recognition of the importance of civilian professional skill sets and their exploitation would be facilitated by having the Army Reserve assume the lead role for domestic operations. In addition, the training mandate of the Reserves must be modified to place greater emphasis on domestic operations. Doran identified three priorities for better preparing Reservists to respond to domestic emergencies:

1. Integration of Reserve Command Teams into local communities and development of ties with local governments;
2. Better liaison with disaster management bodies at the municipal, provincial and federal levels; and,
3. *In situ* training in areas outside of military bases, including built-up urban zones.⁴¹

Doran maintains that in terms of training, the “where” is as important as the “what”. Although based on the fact that Reservist skill sets are under-utilized, these priorities must be supported by the chain of command, including assisting with the considerable administrative requirements for conduct of local training such as land use agreements (LUAs). These priorities would be better achieved with the Army Reserve in the lead role for domestic operations, as integration into community emergency preparedness and development of local training would be facilitated by employing Reservists living locally.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 76.

Development of Strategic Partnerships. The Defence Strategy 2020 policy document clearly identifies the importance of strategic partnerships; the undertaking of joint planning with Other Government Departments (OGDs) is listed as a specific objective.⁴² From a military perspective, the cyber-space environment in which the Reserves will play a key role is recognized as an important aspect of the emerging strategic environment.⁴³ The role of the Defence Department in assisting OGDs in delivering their programs in areas such as drug interdiction and environmental and fisheries protection is also identified.⁴⁴ The importance of strategic partnerships is a component of the Standing Operations Order for Domestic Operations (SOODO) in that “fostering relationships with outside agencies is highly encouraged” and “the sharing of information, which is not about individuals, is not restricted.”⁴⁵ However, as with everything else in government, establishing these relationships is far easier in theory than in practice.

Within a domestic operations context, the whole-of-government (WoG) approach to the Vancouver Olympics highlighted a number of issues in establishing effective strategic partnerships; these difficulties can be both physical and cultural in nature. From a cultural perspective, building an environment of transparency, trust, interoperability and standardized procedures among governmental departments can only be achieved through

⁴²Department of National Defence, *Shaping the Future of the Canadian Forces: A Strategy for 2020...*, 6.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 5.

⁴⁵Department of National Defence, 6397-03000-01 VOL 005 (Dom Strat 1), *Standing Operations Order for Domestic Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2012), 21.

familiarity.⁴⁶ Many Reservists work for government departments and could be the critical vectors for forging partnerships. Granatstein and Belzile also identified the need for better strategic partnerships between the Army, Air and Naval Reserves for development of joint plans for domestic operations.⁴⁷

Conclusions

English's work on the role of the Militia in the contemporary CAF provides much of the context in support of the Army Reserves assuming the lead for domestic operations.⁴⁸ The assistance of the Reserves in domestic disaster relief has "conditioned" Canadians to look to the Reserves as the front line responders. In addition, many communities feel that local Reserve units should be tied into emergency planning and execution. Public Safety Canada, the coordinating agency in a WoG approach to emergency preparedness has identified the Reserves as a key resource in building capacity to deal with natural disaster and local emergencies.

According to Lieutenant-General Vance, the incoming Chief of the Defence Staff, "the Reserves now have capabilities that do not exist in the Regular Force, so they are automatically implicated in operations."⁴⁹ Technical expertise and good soldiering are determined by training, not Regular or Reserve status. Not only is it best suited for the task, but the Army Reserve assuming the lead for domestic operations is critical to its sustainability as a contributor to operational readiness. As identified by Major-General

⁴⁶Christopher Marvin, "The Haiti Earthquake, Vancouver Olympics, Information Sharing and the Comprehensive Approach: Better the Devil You Know?" Joint Command and Staff Programme Paper, Canadian Forces College, 2014, 4.

⁴⁷Granatstein and Belzile, *The Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves, 1995: Ten Years Later*.

⁴⁸English, *The Role of the Militia in Today's Canadian Forces*.

⁴⁹Granatstein and Belzile, *The Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves, 1995: Ten Years Later...*, 17.

Dennis Tabbernor, the definition of the role of the reservist prioritizes them within the organization as a whole; the value of the Army Reserve would increase considerably in the lead role for domestic operations.⁵⁰ Assignment of the lead to the Army Reserve would also have a positive impact on morale and training, as well as placing the CAF into a configuration that best meets Canada's defence requirements.

⁵⁰Tabbernor, *Reserves on Operations...*, 47.

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