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RESERVE RESTRUCTURING: A PATH TO INCREASING THE CANADIAN ARMY'S OPERATIONAL OUTPUT

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Service Paper

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AIM

1. This service paper discusses considerations for restructuring the Canadian Army Reserve (ARes) to enable the Canadian Army (CA) to more effectively generate its remits to *Strong, Secure, Engaged* (SSE). Although the ARes currently generates approximately 20% of the CA's personnel that deploy on operations, restructuring the ARes through organizational changes and the assignment of unique force generation roles could potentially enable the CA to further leverage the ARes' potential. While this paper discusses considerations related to the potential restructuring of the ARes, including the impacts that the Strengthening the Army Reserve (StAR) and the Force Mix Structure Design (FMSD) initiatives will have on the future organization and role of the ARes, the considerations discussed within this paper are not exhaustive. Deeper analysis of this issue must occur before steps are taken to formally restructure the ARes.

INTRODUCTION

2. In 2015, the Auditor General of Canada released a scathing report on the state of the ARes. Specifically, the report highlighted numerous systemic issues that limit the CA's ability to fully capitalize on the ARes' potential. These systemic issues include ARes units receiving a lack of clear guidance for preparing personnel for operations; having insufficient personnel and development opportunities; facing challenges with meeting their training requirements; and not being well integrated with the CA's Regular Force (RegF).¹

3. The public identification of these issues led to the creation of the StAR initiative as a conduit for addressing these problems and for increasing the ARes' operational output. LGen Wynnyk, the former Commander of the CA, identified that "strengthening the ARes is strengthening the CA."² The CA is currently also reviewing its existing force structures as part of the Chief of Force Development-led FMSD project to ensure that its future force structure will allow it to generate all of the capabilities specified within SSE.³ The CA's RegF currently has 12 manoeuvre units, but has only sufficient enablers to support approximately five manoeuvre units. These enablers include, but are not limited to the CA's artillery, intelligence, signals/command support, combat engineers, and combat service support capabilities. Unfortunately the disparity between manoeuvre and enabler units places considerable strain on the CA's enablers by forcing them to deploy more often. FMSD's outcomes will be important because significant changes to the RegF's structure will shape the capabilities that the CA requires the ARes to generate.

¹ Canada, Office of the Auditor General, *Report 5 – Canadian Army Reserve – National Defence*. Ottawa: Canada Communications Group, 2016, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/about-reports-pubs-report-plan-priorities/2016-canadas-reserve-force.page> (accessed September 22, 2018).

² Canada, Department of National Defence, 1901-1 (DLFD SI-5), *Fragmentation Order 001 – Mission Tasks Tranche 1 to Canadian Army Operation Order 27 June 2017 – Strengthening the Army Reserve* (Ottawa: Canadian Army, 2018), 1-2.

³ David Hill, *Briefing Note for the Commander of the Canadian Army, Force Mix Structure Design (FMSD) – Initial Orientation*, 2017, 1.

DISCUSSION

4. The following assumptions have been made to provide a framework for analyzing potential changes to the ARes' structure:

- a. The Vice Chief of the Defence Staff will amend the Multi-Year Establishment Plan process to allow the CA to reassign positions between its trades;
- b. FMSD will lead to a reduction in the size and/or number of RegF manoeuvre units and a corresponding increase in the CA's enabler capabilities;
- c. StAR will lead the ARes to assume a greater role in providing the CA with individual augmentees, formed elements, and unique capabilities;
- d. An experiential gap generally exists between ARes leaders and their RegF counterparts. This gap starts at the Capt/MCpl-level and expands as one increases in rank because of a lack of developmental opportunities; and
- e. This experiential gap can be mitigated with sufficient pre-deployment training and appropriate developmental opportunities; and
- f. Mission tasked ARes units (MTU) will retain their current mission tasks.

6. While the 1994 White Paper's mobilization concept arguably provided the ARes with an important, albeit not specifically assigned role, the current Canadian Defence Policy aims to enhance the Reserve's operational role beyond providing individual augmentation to RegF units, participating in domestic operations, and preparing for mobilization.⁴ SSE specifically envisions the Primary Reserves becoming a part-time force that is fully integrated with the RegF and capable of generating full-time capabilities.⁵ This shift in focus is important because it provides a basis for restructuring the reserves. Rather than merely mirroring the RegF, this restructuring should focus the ARes towards generating capabilities that complement the RegF's capabilities.

7. StAR has already started allocating roles to individual ARes units through the assignment of mission tasks. The current StAR mission tasks consist of Light Urban Search and Rescue, Pioneers, Mortars, Influence Activities, and Direct Fire Support.⁶ These mission tasks build upon the Public Duties, Territorial Battalion Group, and Arctic Response Company Group tasks that have already been assigned to ARes units. Unfortunately, these tasks were assigned to ARes units on an ad hoc and piecemeal basis by the CA's Divisions rather than as the result of a

⁴ Canada, Department of National Defence, *1994 Defence White Paper*, 1994: 33-34, http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2012/dn-nd/D3-6-1994-eng.pdf (accessed September 18, 2018); Canada, Department of National Defence, *Strong Secure Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy* (Ottawa: Canada Communications Group, 2017), 68, <http://dgpaapp.forces.gc.ca/en/canada-defence-policy/docs/canada-defence-policy-report.pdf> (accessed September 18, 2018).

⁵ Canada, *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy*, 67.

⁶ Canada, 1901-1 (DLFD SI-5), *Fragmentation Order 001 – Mission Tasks Tranche 1 to Canadian Army Operation Order 27 June 2017 – Strengthening the Army Reserve*, 6.

holistic Army-level analysis of how the CA can best generate its remits to SSE.⁷ The manner in which mission tasks were assigned to ARes units may lead to future dissatisfaction within MTUs if mission tasks have to be reassigned to different units when new capabilities are identified as being best suited to specific locations or organizations. This is because ARes members generally place great value in their unit's identity and thus, fundamental changes to their unit's role threaten this identity.

8. As part of having the ARes generate capabilities for the CA, select ARes units should be assigned the responsibility of force generating formed sub-units and sub-sub-units to augment the breadth of the RegF's current capabilities on deployed operations. Having the ARes generate core capabilities, in addition to specialized capabilities, provides ARes personnel with a wide range of interesting employment opportunities. Generating formed elements also provides the ARes' leaders with deployed command opportunities, which significantly develops officers who are employed in this manner. Finally, having the ARes generate formed elements will enable the reinvestment of RegF personnel into other capabilities.

9. The planning and implementation of StAR and any plans to restructure the ARes should be synchronized with the CA's work on FMSD. This is because FMSD will likely shape the CA's future force structure, which in turn will lead to the identification of capabilities that the ARes will need to produce.⁸ For instance, if the decision is taken to strip one rifle company and one combat support company from each RegF infantry battalion, then it is reasonable to assume that the ARes will become responsible for generating the forces required to address these capability gaps. The assignment of future force generational responsibilities should occur through the continued assignment of mission tasks to ARes units as this provides these units with a clear idea of the types of training and preparedness activities that they need to undertake. The identification of these tasks should conceivably also lead to the restructuring of the ARes Brigades to enable them to most effectively generate their assigned capabilities.

10. While the identification of RegF capability gaps will likely form the basis for assigning future mission tasks to the ARes, RegF structure changes should not be used as a pretext for dumping unwanted tasks on the ARes. This is because the viability of the ARes is directly tied to its ability to attract and retain personnel. The ARes' inability to attract and retain personnel would directly undermine the CA's ability to successfully generate capabilities that are assigned to the ARes. As such, ARes attraction and retention must be a major consideration as FMSD progresses. In some instances, it might be preferable to assign tasks to the ARes that are more suited for RegF units, if the assignment of these tasks to the ARes enables the CA to more effectively meet its overall SSE obligations.

11. It is also imperative that the ARes only be assigned mission tasks that it is capable of generating with its limited funding, equipment, and training time. Specifically, most ARes units train one night per week and one weekend per month. As these units must also complete annual individual battle task standard training and core training related to their trade specific skills, any mission tasks that are assigned to these units must be technically simple enough to be effectively

⁷ Canada, Department of National Defence, 3350-1 (Dir ARes 2), *Canadian Army Operation Order – Strengthening the Army Reserve* (Ottawa: Canadian Army, 2016), 8.

⁸ Hill, 1.

trained during the units' remaining training time. The ARes is poorly suited to becoming the primary force generator of technically complex enablers, like signallers and combat engineers. Rather, the ARes should focus its enabler production efforts on generating core capabilities of these enablers since this would allow the RegF to focus its efforts on generating specialty capabilities that are more difficult to maintain. For instance, the RegF Combat Engineer Regiments are responsible for generating a wide range of combat engineering related capabilities, such as field squadrons, heavy equipment, water supply, combat diving, and improvised explosive device disposal. While the majority of these capabilities require highly specialized training, the ARes is capable of generating field squadrons, which in turn could free up RegF soldiers for these other capabilities.

12. The requirement within StAR for having MTUs force generate their assigned capabilities at a 1:7 training ratio exceeds many of these units' abilities.⁹ For instance, the StAR Mortar Platoon is established at 50 positions, which necessitates qualifying 350 personnel to operate mortars to generate this platoon.¹⁰ The ARes currently contains no units that possess 350 personnel. As such, some Mission Tasked ARes units are sharing their mission task responsibilities with other units.¹¹ Unfortunately, the un-tasked units do not receive credit for generating these personnel and could be potentially assigned with their own mission tasks should the need arise in the future. The assignment of mission tasks to these other units would obviously undermine the ARes' ability to meet its overall force generational responsibilities.

13. Including RegF personnel within the force generational requirements imposed on the ARes units would reduce the burden created by this high training ratio. Specifically, the CA is increasing the size of the MTU's Regular Support Staff cadres to better enable these units to conduct their mission task training. If these additional cadre personnel can deploy with their units, and the force generation ratio for these personnel is lower (i.e. 1:1 or 1:1.5), then the CA could significantly reduce the number of ARes personnel that must be trained on each capability. Reducing the ARes force generational requirements in this manner would allow the ARes to take on a greater number of mission tasks by freeing up personnel to support the generation of other capabilities.

14. The analysis conducted for FMSD should determine the optimal size of these training cadres since the end state of this effort should be significantly less RegF personnel supporting the generation of capabilities that have been assigned to the ARes. This is because posting the same number of RegF personnel into ARes units to support mission task training would defeat the purpose of freeing up personnel to expand the RegF's other capabilities. The optimal size of these cadres is likely as few personnel as is necessary for facilitating the successful generation of these capabilities, while nationally maintaining enough qualified RegF personnel to generate these capabilities for short-notice Rotation 0 deployments. Obviously, the ARes, supported by their training cadres, should become the primary force generator for subsequent rotations.

⁹ Canada, 1901-1 (DLFD SI-5), *Fragmentation Order 001 – Mission Tasks Tranche 1 to Canadian Army Operation Order 27 June 2017 – Strengthening the Army Reserve*, 14.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Annex C.

¹¹ This was discussed by the Commander of the Canadian Army (Comd CA) and the Division Commanders during the March 2018 back brief to Comd CA on how the Divisions were implementing StAR.

15. Within the 1995 Special Commission of the Restructuring of the Reserves report, former Supreme Court of Canada Chief Justice Brian Dickson, historian Jack Granatstein and former Canadian Chief of the Land Staff LGen (Retd) Charles Belzile identified that concerns exist among some members of the RegF about the ARes leaders' capabilities.¹² This is largely attributable to ARes leaders being provided with less developmental and experiential opportunities. The report specifically identified that ARes leaders were generally not provided with suitable deployed leadership opportunities.¹³ While the career course training standards for RegF and ARes personnel are the same, the small size of many ARes units fails to provide its leaders with appropriate development as they increase in rank and responsibility.¹⁴ For instance, commanding a platoon-sized unit as a lieutenant-colonel does not provide the commanding officer with rank-appropriate experience, which in turn fails to suitably prepare this officer for assuming lieutenant-colonel-level responsibilities during deployed operations.

16. As part of providing suitable development opportunities, the ARes should expand its efforts to amalgamate smaller units into "Tactical Groups." This is because the creation of larger ARes units will provide the ARes' officers and senior non-commissioned officers (Sr NCOs) with more rank-appropriate development. While the 1995 Special Commission of the Restructuring of the Reserves report identified the same requirement, efforts to restructure the ARes in the late 1990s and early 2000s were largely unsuccessful due to political pressure aimed at undermining any initiatives that threatened the historical traditions of individual reserve units.¹⁵ To mitigate this threat during future restructuring efforts, the ARes should continue allowing the elements contained within these "tactically groups" to maintain their individual history and heritage, including the wearing of traditional accoutrements and maintaining their own HCols. Grouping these organizations in such a manner will also enable these units to be divided in the future should their staffing levels rise to a level that justifies their reestablishment as separate entities. Grouping units would also alleviate some of the strain that small units face with preparing officers and Sr NCO to eventually become commanding officers and regimental sergeants-major by providing these leaders with more experience at lower rank-levels before they advance to positions of greater responsibility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

17. The following is a summary of the points that have been recommended within this paper to enable the CA to more effectively capitalize on the ARes' potential:

- a. Restructure the ARes in a manner that does not mirror the RegF brigades, but rather complements the RegF's capabilities and is based on the outcomes of FMSD as this will increase the CA's overall ability to meet its remits to SSE;

¹² Canada, Department of National Defence, *1995 Land Force Reserve Restructuring* (Ottawa: DND, 1995), 16.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 30-32.

¹⁵ Jack Granatstein and Charles Belzile, *The Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves, 1995: Ten Years Later* (Calgary: Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute, 2005), 6-8, https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/cdfai/pages/41/attachments/original/1413661138/Restructuring_The_Reserv es_-_English.pdf?1413661138 (accessed September 18, 2018).

- b. Continue providing force generation roles to ARes units through the assignment of mission tasks that do not exceed the ARes' force generational capabilities;
- c. Provide mission tasked units with significantly more RegF personnel to enable their mission task training. These RegF personnel should be allowed to deploy on operations to reduce the overall number of ARes personnel that mission tasked units must produce; and
- d. Provided suitable developmental opportunities by providing deployed command opportunities to ARes personnel and amalgamating small units to provide ARes leaders with rank-appropriate sized units to command.

CONCLUSION

18. While the ARes has and continues to play an important role within the CA, efforts like the StAR and FMSD should enable the CA to more fully capitalize on the ARes' potential. Considering the emphasis that SSE places on the ARes generating full-time capability with part-time soldiers and on integrating into the RegF, both the RegF and the ARes should be restructured in a manner that allows the CA to best meet its remits to SSE. This restructuring should not aim to merely have the ARes brigades mirror their RegF counterparts, but rather to organize the ARes' formations and assign roles to ARes units that complement the capabilities generated by the RegF. This restructuring must also provide ARes leaders with suitable developmental opportunities as this will allow the CA to more fully leverage the ARes. Although not discussed since it falls outside the scope of this paper, it is recommended that future analysis efforts focus on the benefits and risks of either convincing the provinces to enact job protection legislation for ARes members or expanding reservist employer incentive programs, such as the Compensation for Employers of Reservists Program to cover training and other ARes-related activities. This is because increasing ARes member availability will have a far greater impact on enabling the CA's efforts to enhance its operational output than changing the ARes' structure or assigning additional mission tasks to ARes units. Ultimately, efforts like StAR and FMSD should enable the CA to best identify how the RegF and ARes should be structured and tasked to best meet its remits to SSE. The implementation of such changes will better support the ARes' efforts to perform a strategically important role within the future CA.

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