THE FUTURE OF THE UK’S
RESERVE FORCES

Mark Phillips

OCCASIONAL PAPER
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Front Cover Image
Troops from 7 Scots are recovered by a Polish ME 8 helicopter following a live firing exercise, during the tripartite event conducted annually by the United Kingdom, Poland and Ukraine in 2008. Given the centenary celebration of the Territorial Army that year, it was decided that territorials should represent the UK in 2008.
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The Future of the UK’s Reserve Forces

Mark Phillips
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In October 2010, the prime minister announced that the government would assess whether the UK’s Reserve Forces are ‘properly structured for the type of conflict we envisage undertaking in future so that we make best use of the skills, experience and capabilities of our Reservists while at the same time moving towards a more efficient structure’. The Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) study is intended to be an open-minded, fundamental review of the Reserve Forces’ role and structure. The baseline is provided by the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), and in particular the Defence Planning Assumptions (DPAs) and Future Force 2020 (FF20) structure it proposes beyond combat operations in Afghanistan; emerging work on the ‘Whole Force’ concept and, within it, the ‘Total Support Force’; and the need to sustain the volunteer ethos of reservist service. In addition, the prime minister specifically asked the study to look at international best practice and lessons.

This report is intended to contribute to the ongoing Future Reserves (FR20) work by independently identifying and exploring key areas that should be addressed, identifying examples of best practice and lessons, and applying these to the UK context. In so doing, it should provide a constructive benchmark for the Ministry of Defence’s emerging findings, allowing the MoD to determine if any key issues have been missed or new avenues should be explored, and assist with the challenge of developing detailed implementation plans.

This report looks at five interrelated areas:

1. The question of what is expected of the military in the future, and the implications of future tasks for the role of the Reserve Forces and other types of manpower
2. The approaches of three key partners – the US, Canada and Australia – to identify lessons from their ‘Total Force’ policies and approaches
3. The social context within which Defence operates, as transitioning to a Total Force policy successfully is dependent on recruiting and retaining sufficient numbers of people
4. How Defence engages with employers and industry, as their support will be vital to achieving full manning and capability requirements
5. The value for money of different forms of manpower.

Through FR20, there is an opportunity to have a coherent policy for the use of the reserve component and other forms of manpower – something which has always been missing. Reservists have deployed extensively on operations primarily because the 1998 DPAs have been exceeded continuously since 2002. The MoD maintained that it would use the Reserve Forces on smaller-scale operations as and when operational commitments returned to within
The Future of the UK’s Reserve Forces

the DPAs. However, no guidance was ever produced about the extent to which personnel would be mobilised on small- or medium-scale operations and the policy position also varied from service to service. The 2009 Strategic Review of Reserves continued to reinforce the idea that reserves should be used for maximum, large-scale operations or to augment regulars on enduring complex operations, to support national resilience and ‘connect with the nation’ – though it never intended to redefine the role of the Reserve Forces, but collect an evidence base to allow strategic decisions to be taken at a later date.

In other words, the use of Reserve Forces (and the policy underpinning their use) has been reactive and ad hoc. The SDSR, and the DPAs and Force Structure 2020 it puts forward, maintain the idea that other sources of manpower should only be used when the planning assumptions are exceeded or to provide specialist skills on an infrequent basis. However, future military tasks, the future character of conflict, and the capabilities these will demand, mean that alternative forms of manpower should become integral to achieving Defence outputs. It will be difficult for regular forces to develop the range of skills necessary while still maintaining existing high-end capabilities and meeting general duty and standing commitments. Therefore, integration of alternative manpower will be required for small- and medium-scale, often enduring, tasks including: a larger military contribution to homeland security and resilience including military responses to terrorism, cyber attack and civil contingencies; military power projection; standing home and Alliance commitments; and long-term conflict prevention. The MoD has now recognised the need to formally attribute non-regular forms of manpower, but needs to take this forward in a meaningful way.

What Is a ‘Total’ or ‘Whole Force’ Approach?
The integration of different force components has been achieved in other countries through Total Force approaches. To date the UK’s ambition for a Total or ‘Whole Force has been interpreted narrowly and progress towards it has varied between the services. The Army has taken limited steps to more closely align Territorial Army (TA) units with their regular counterparts for the purposes of training, though the RAF and Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAuxAF) have made greater strides by sharing a chain of command, being collocated and having regular commanders direct reserve output. The Royal Navy and Royal Naval Reserve are also moving in this latter direction.

The current debate about the relative balance between the regular and reserve components reflects this lack of progress in developing a true Whole Force approach. Some argue that the Reserve should provide formed units and take responsibility for heavy, conventional combat capabilities required for ‘traditional’ war. Others argue that the size of the Reserve Forces should be reduced and effort put into maintaining a good size of well equipped
regulars held at high readiness. However, analysis of the lessons and best practice from the Total Force approaches of the US, Canada and Australia identifies that what is really needed is:

1. Adequate force development
2. Developing an intelligent force generation process to meet the specific requirements of different tasks
3. This includes integrating ‘non-regular’ forms of manpower into the MoD’s force development process.

Effort should not be focused on trying to identify a precise, fixed structure for reserve forces *per se*. The use of individual reservists versus formed reserve units – or the balance between the two – are both required but will vary between the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force and, perhaps more importantly, by task. Setting up a new structure will only invert the existing criticisms of the balance of force components at a later date; the emphasis must be on integrating regular and reserve components, not establishing silos. Moreover, it is not just the Volunteer Reserve that will be used in future. Contractor support will be increasingly important on operations and to allow the UK to reconstitute capabilities. The MoD and others should no longer look at the military in a binary way, as consisting of regulars and reserves and external support. This is as much a cultural change, requiring leadership, as it is about organisational and structural changes.

**What Defines Effective Force Development and Generation?**

In moving in this direction, best practice from other countries shows that an adequate force development process means integrated regular/reserve formations, chains of command and training. The regular force should define what training levels the Reserve will meet, oversee that training and determine the required readiness levels. In determining the balance between formed units and individuals, it is also important to bear in mind the general principle that the Reserve Forces should build capability packages that can be sustained at higher levels of readiness in an inactive duty status and deployed with a minimum amount of pre-deployment training. This points towards non-complex platforms and systems, or specialist capabilities that draw on civilian skills and are not held within the regular component.

Indeed, the future strategic context is likely to drive a demand for specialist skills rather than general duty manpower or the provision of ‘platforms’. Individual reservists are able to contribute unique and specialist skills that, when integrated with regular units and other departments and agencies or combined to form a specialist team/unit, can meet the bespoke requirements of future operations. Generally, it will also be easier for individuals rather than reserve units or sub-units to deploy quickly in response to urgent requirements. Individuals can have higher readiness levels depending on
their personal circumstances and existing skillset. It would be valuable for the MoD to assess and record civilian qualifications and skills which can contribute to Defence outputs, and perhaps also to recruit people specifically for these skills and qualifications.

In relation to formed units, even at lower readiness levels it will be difficult for reserve units to maintain full-spectrum capabilities where the complexity of modern systems is high and, as a result, the levels of training and use required to maintain proficiency are substantial. Contracts with industry might help overcome this to develop and maintain expertise in cyber, ISTAR and other technical areas, though contractor support is largely limited to the support area at the moment and MoD thinking about what capability areas to extend contractor support to is immature. Greater work is needed to determine those areas in which the government and companies are willing to allow the extension of contractor support.

Reserve sub-units could, however, maintain capabilities in less technically complex areas such as combat support and combat service support more easily. Moving these to the Reserve will depend on the willingness of the regular force to accept risk against readiness; there would likely be a demand for improved readiness by changing mobilisation times and increasing training days. The RAF and RN have been better at integrating regular and reserve elements compared to the Army but the Multi-Role Brigade concept now represents a real opportunity. Alternatively, sub-units could easily perform ‘low intensity’ tasks – there are notable examples of this in the maritime domain in other countries.

Achieving Value for Money
The real value of units currently lies in administrative and training functions, though integration with the regular components for these purposes could decrease the high costs associated with regular support staff. This will help achieve greater value for money, which is a function of cost across the Defence Lines of Development as well as readiness and operational effectiveness. Readiness, in particular, is a key criterion that needs to be assessed. Assessing different manpower sources against this value for money benchmark confirms that: contractor support will be the cheapest option and provide highest readiness levels; individuals with existing specialist skills will be cheaper and provide higher levels of readiness than the usual Volunteer Reserve – this should be the focus of recruitment activity and government should explore how to encourage more specialists to volunteer for the Reserve Forces and, within that, high readiness; general reservists will be best suited to low readiness, low technology, enduring tasks; industry could help maintain full-spectrum capabilities more effectively than reserve units; costs on deployment will be comparable for regular and reserve components but deployed contractor support options will be cheaper.
A key question that still remains is whether costs within the Reserve Forces could be reduced further while maintaining (and ideally improving) operational effectiveness and, in particular, readiness. The cost drivers for the reserve component, particularly the TA, remain estate and unit support costs. This is confirmed by international benchmarks. Integrating the regular and reserve components could help to rationalise the volunteer estate and therefore reduce associated infrastructure costs through co-location. However, this will not in itself reduce the significant regular support costs for reservists. These costs are driven by training requirements. There needs to be much greater clarity about the role of the Reserve Forces to drive more focused and targeted training regimes. Innovative ways to reduce these costs would then be to: integrate reservists with regular unit training; recruit individuals with specialist skills; for skills of low technological complexity, develop links with local voluntary organisations and academic institutions; explore the possibility of joint training with the private sector (companies are interested in this); and/or explore greater use of contracted support for training purposes (for both regular and reserve components). Defence should exploit the willingness of companies to share the training of staff and to develop joint employment contracts or career plans. The MoD should draw on the proven US Army Reserve ‘Employer Partnership’ model to enable this.

The Importance of Engaging Employers and Industry
It follows that engagement with employers and industry will be vital to achieving full manning and capability requirements. Employers have to support the mobilisation of any employees who are reservists, and increasingly industry provides contracted support through a number of employment models, including Sponsored Reserves. In the future, the requirement for good engagement with employers and industry will become more important as two developments start to take effect. First, manning models that enable a more fluid and flexible mix of military, contractor and civilian staff, on demand and through career: employers will have to manage this. Secondly, a ‘Total Support Force’ where industry and reserves are integrated into regular structures against readiness assumptions and agile force generation requirements. Industry needs to support this. There is a clear need for a Defence strategy to drive employer support, including a strengthened and revised SaBRE campaign, and for the MoD to undertake more engagement with industry to drive forward its vision for Defence Support. There are prospects for combining MoD and private company training and the development of joint employment contracts or career plans. In addition to FR20, the MoD should take these factors into account when taking forward work on the New Employment Model and Defence Career Partnering.
Welfare Issues and the Military Covenant

Contractor support for operations is likely to increase. Individuals within the Sponsored Reserve category (and other forms of contractor support) are likely to develop health and well-being issues, and how the government should address these in conjunction with industry needs to be explored.

This is part of a wider issue, as despite some innovative changes to healthcare provision, reservists still suffer worse mental health compared to regulars. There is new momentum to address this as a result of the government’s intention to place the Military Covenant on a more formal footing. Legislation could be useful for ensuring that reservist needs are met by the wide range of local statutory bodies involved in the delivery of welfare support. Many of these public sector organisations are unlikely to have real experience of dealing with the challenges faced by the Reserve Forces and their families. The MoD will also continue to rely heavily on interventions by third sector (voluntary) bodies to deal with welfare issues. The experience these organisations have with veterans is extensive; they should also try to extend their work, in collaboration with government, to help reservists.

However, a number of other factors are known to contribute to poor health outcomes amongst reservists. Evidence shows that welfare and health problems are enhanced by poor status, a perceived lack of leadership and poor unit cohesion. Evidence also shows that when individuals are able to apply existing civilian skills and knowledge this improves health outcomes. This reinforces the importance of current efforts to develop mapping and databases of niche skills as well as a niche skills augmentation cell, but also of recruiting individuals because of their existing skills and knowledge. It also reinforces the importance of integrating regular and reserve components; this could ease the challenge of unit cohesion by ensuring reservists have contact with operationally experienced individuals.

In other words, while the Military Covenant debate surrounding particular welfare issues is important, it can mask some broader strategic issues which are also crucial. These include: articulating a clear requirement of the roles and skills required both for the recruitment of individuals into a reserve and for their deployment on operations; integrating reserve and regular components, including for training and equipment; accepting resulting resourcing implications; creating proper career structures and planning; strengthened and more regular communication with reservists, their families and support structures; the need for the government and the chain of command to provide adequate and timely resourcing across each of the Defence Lines of Development. The proposed annual report to parliament on how the Military Covenant is being delivered should include a specific section on the Reserve Forces. This should explore how well the Reserve Forces are being integrated with the regular component across all Defences Lines of Development.
Development, as well as welfare issues, levels of employer engagement and support, government communication and public recognition. How the evidence base for this annual report is developed will be crucial; engagement with individuals and their families is vital for accurate data.

In addition to FR20, the Ministry of Defence should take these factors into account when taking forward work on the New Employment Model.

**Reserve Forces and the ‘Big Society’**

The reciprocal element of the Military Covenant is that the armed forces should reflect and respect the values and nature of society. The government itself regards servicemen and women ‘connecting with the nation’ as important for increasing public understanding of the military and Defence.

Achieving a balance between an operationally effective reserve component and one which ‘connects with the nation’ will be difficult, particularly as reserves will have to integrate with regular forces in the future (with resulting implications for the Volunteer Estate). The government will need to decide whether its real priority is ensuring the operational relevance and effectiveness of the reserve component or maintaining a Defence presence in society. The demands of the future character of conflict and challenges following the SDSR suggest that it should be the former. If the armed forces assume a greater role in homeland security and resilience, this will help maintain a public understanding of Defence. The government must be clear about the future role of the armed forces in the homeland and, within this, the place of the Reserve Forces.

The government can do more to connect Defence with society itself by improving communication about, and public recognition of, the armed forces and the role of Defence at national and local levels. Indeed, this would arguably be more valuable as evidence suggests that the issue is not public support for the armed forces themselves but lack of understanding of current operations. The burden should not fall on already strained forces.

**Conclusion**

The research for this paper clearly points toward using alternative forms of manpower where they have comparative advantage – namely, in providing defined capabilities that can be sustained at higher levels of readiness in an inactive duty status and deployed with a minimum of pre-deployment training – and integrating these with regular components and planning assumptions. This will meet the obligations alluded to in the 2009 Reserves Proposition, including those that are welfare-related. It points to concentrating on using individual reservists in key areas and, in relation to non-specialists, maintaining low technology, low readiness capabilities
at unit level. Moreover, the Reserve Forces will generally be best suited to standing or enduring tasks. Contractors will provide additional flexibility.
I. Introduction

In October 2010, the prime minister announced that the government would assess whether the Reserve Forces are ‘properly structured for the type of conflict we envisage undertaking in future so that we make best use of the skills, experience and capabilities of our Reservists while at the same time moving towards a more efficient structure’.¹ The Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) study is intended to be an open-minded, fundamental review of the Reserve Forces’ role and structure to ensure the UK makes the best use of reservist skills, experience and capabilities. The baseline for FR20 is provided by the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), and in particular the Defence Planning Assumptions (DPAs) and Future Force 2020 (FF20) structure it proposes beyond combat operations in Afghanistan; emerging work on the ‘Whole Force’ concept and, within it, the ‘Total Support Force’; and the need to sustain the volunteer ethos of reservist service.² In addition, the prime minister specifically asked the study to look at international best practice and lessons, most notably in relation to formed units and sub-units.

This report is intended to contribute to the ongoing FR20 work (including implementation) by independently identifying and exploring key areas that should be addressed, identifying examples of best practice and lessons, and applying these to the UK context. In so doing, it should provide a constructive benchmark for the Ministry of Defence’s emerging findings and also allow the MoD to determine if any key issues have been missed or new avenues should be explored.

This report looks at five interrelated areas.

First, the question of what is expected of the military in the future, and the implications of future tasks for the role of the Reserve Forces and other types of manpower. The Defence Planning Assumptions do not reflect the likely demands of the future strategic context and it continues to be assumed that each element of the Future Force 2020 will only need to be reinforced or augmented by other sources of manpower, usually when the Defence Planning Assumptions are exceeded – not that alternative forms of manpower could become integral to achieving Defence outputs. This is mistaken: regular forces will increasingly have to rely on alternative forms of manpower to meet the core requirements of Military Tasks, which are likely to be small and medium scale, enduring and often require specialist skills.

Second, the approaches of three key partners – the US, Canada and Australia – to identify lessons from their ‘Total Force’ policies and approaches. To date the UK’s ambition for a Total Force has been interpreted narrowly and progress towards it has varied between the services. The government has not provided a clear statement of intent or direction. In relation to the
reserves, debates about formed units versus individual augmentees have therefore continued but both ignore the sophisticated (and perhaps even subtle) rationale behind Total or Whole Force policies – which is to develop a flexible, adaptable and intelligent approach to force development and force generation according to task, rather than identifying a precise, fixed structure for reserve forces per se.

Third, the social context within which Defence operates, as transitioning to a Total Force policy successfully is dependent on recruiting and retaining sufficient numbers of people. There are examples of best practice from other sectors for how Defence can encourage and sustain volunteerism, and the government’s intention to place the Military Covenant on a more formal footing provides an opportunity to make necessary changes.

Fourth, how Defence engages with employers and industry, as their support will be vital to achieving full manning and capability requirements. In the future, the requirement for good engagement with employers and industry will become more vital as two developments start to take effect. First, manning models that enable a more fluid and flexible mix of military, contractor and civilian staff, on demand and through career. Employers will have to manage this. Secondly, a Total Support Force where industry and reserves are integrated into regular structures against readiness assumptions and agile force generation requirements. Industry needs to support this. This section analyses the engagement between the MoD and a wide range of companies and the appetite in the private sector for exploring new and innovative employment models and partnerships in the future. The MoD must become more proactive and strengthen its engagement with, and support of, a wider range of employers. It also needs to undertake more engagement with industry to drive forward its vision for Defence Support; in doing so it can exploit the willingness of companies to share the training of staff and to develop joint employment contracts or career plans, and should also be more creative in extending contractor support.

Fifth, the value for money of different forms of manpower. Achieving value for money is understandably at the top of the coalition government’s agenda, and the expectation will undoubtedly be that the future use of Reserve Forces and other manpower should contribute to this aim. Value for money is a function of the balance between two factors: direct cost comparisons and readiness/operational effectiveness. There are opportunities to reduce costs across the Defence Lines of Development through different manpower mixes and changes to training, support staff and infrastructure, notably by integrating regular and reserve components at all stages.

The methodology for this think piece was extensive and varied. It consisted of desk studies in each area, supplemented by interviews with a number
of ministers and officials in the UK and abroad (on an anonymous basis), a survey of 200 companies and peer review.

There is an opportunity for the government to develop a coherent policy for the reserve component – a policy which has been lacking to date. The government needs to focus on intelligent force generation to meet the varied demands and challenges of the future strategic context and character of conflict. This is not as ‘exciting’ as proposing an entirely new structure for the UK’s Reserve Forces. However, it is the sophisticated and perhaps even subtle combination of a wide range of skills, abilities and attributes of different individuals and formations that will give the armed forces an edge in fulfilling the Military Tasks. Moreover, setting up a new structure will only reverse the existing criticism of inappropriate balances and mixes of force components at a later date: the emphasis must be on integrating regular and reserve components, not establishing silos, as ‘non-regular’ manpower will be integral to achieving Defence outputs in the future. The MoD and others should no longer look at the military in a binary way, as consisting of regular and reserve components and external support. This is as much a cultural change, requiring leadership, as it is about organisational and structural changes.

Notes and References


II. What Is Expected of the UK Military in the Future?

Implications for the Future Role of the Reserve Forces and Other Forms of Manpower

It is axiomatic that a country’s armed forces should be strategy-based, but a strategic basis for the UK’s reserve component has been lacking to date. Reservists have deployed extensively on operations primarily because the 1998 Defence Planning Assumptions (DPAs) have been exceeded continuously since 2002. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) maintained that it would use the Reserve Forces on smaller-scale operations as and when operational commitments returned to within the DPAs.

However, no guidance was ever produced about the extent to which personnel would be mobilised on small- or medium-scale operations, and the policy position also varied from service to service. The Army, for instance, said that the Territorial Army (TA) would primarily be used to augment regular forces for large-scale operations. For smaller operations the MoD planned on the basis of a fully-manned Regular Army meeting the requirement supplemented by small, specialist TA units (unless the DPAs were exceeded).

The 2009 Strategic Review of Reserves subsequently defined three roles for the reserve: supporting regular units which are committed to a maximum, large-scale effort and augmenting regular units deployed on smaller but longer-lasting, complex operations through additional personnel and/or specialists; supporting national resilience; acting as ambassadors to the community (‘connecting with the nation’). It is worth reviewing these tasks against the expectations and demands that follow from, first, the coalition government’s National Security Strategy, and secondly, the future character of conflict. This section takes as its baseline the post-2015 timeframe, by which point the government’s intent is for major combat operations in Afghanistan to be over.

There is a risk that the MoD will rely on the DPAs to determine the structure and contribution of the Reserve Forces – something which it has done since the 1998 Strategic Defence Review (SDR). The DPAs only assume a reserve contribution when they are exceeded and the regular component is under strain. However, in the future, the range of tasks the armed forces are likely to undertake, such as homeland security, limited power projection and conflict prevention are likely to be of small and medium scale. It is not necessarily the case that the DPAs will therefore be exceeded, but that the skills and capabilities demanded by the tasks will require the regular forces to rely on alternative forms of manpower. The MoD’s work on FR20 has recognised
this gap and the need for volunteer reserves to be attributed formally to the DPAs.

1. The National Security Strategy and Defence Planning Assumptions
For the first time, the National Security Strategy published in October 2010 attempted to identify and prioritise national security risks to drive the capability requirements of departments and agencies across government. What is notable is the emphasis given to homeland security and resilience: three of the four ‘Tier One’ risks are concerned with terrorism, including CBRN attack; attacks on UK cyberspace and large-scale e-crime; and major civil contingencies. Those risks which are external to the UK – though with a domestic impact – feature in Tier Two (risk of major instability, insurgency or civil war overseas which creates an environment that terrorists can exploit to threaten the UK) and Tier Three.

The National Security Risk Assessment is translated into eight ‘National Security Tasks’, of which five are particularly relevant to the armed forces:

1. Tackle, at root, the causes of instability
2. Exert influence to exploit opportunities and manage risks
3. Protect the UK and our interests at home, at our border and internationally, to address physical and electronic threats from state and non-state sources
4. Help resolve conflicts and contribute to stability. Where necessary, intervene overseas, including the legal use of coercive force in support of the UK’s vital interests, and to protect our overseas territories and people
5. Provide resilience for the UK by being prepared for all kinds of emergencies, able to recover from shocks and to maintain essential services.

These priorities were, in turn, translated into seven ‘Military Tasks’ by the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR). These tasks serve as a guideline for the type of activities the armed forces should expect to undertake, namely:

1. Defending the UK and its Overseas Territories
2. Providing strategic intelligence
3. Providing nuclear deterrence
4. Supporting civil emergency organisations in times of crisis
5. Defending the UK’s interests by projecting power strategically and through expeditionary interventions
6. Providing a defence contribution to UK influence
7. Providing security for stabilisation.
The government’s DPAs are meant to translate these tasks into operational parameters for the military. However, while the DPAs indicate the reduced scale at which the armed forces should expect to operate as a result of the SDSR, it is unclear how they relate to the Military Tasks.

It is arguable that the DPAs reflect current types of operational activity (albeit at reduced scales) more than they do the likely demands of the future strategic context and the tasks set out in the National Security Strategy. Furthermore, it continues to be assumed that each element of the Future Force 2020 (FF20) will only need to be reinforced by other sources of manpower and capabilities (including from reserves, allies and partners) when the assumptions are exceeded, or that alternative manpower should provide specialist skills on an infrequent basis\(^3\) – not that alternative forms of manpower could become integral to achieving Defence outputs.

2. The Baseline for FR20: What Are the Government’s Real Priorities?
The Defence Planning Assumptions encourage an approach which views alternative forms of manpower as secondary contributors to Defence output, to be used primarily when regular forces are stretched. However, the likelihood of alternative manpower sources becoming integral to achieving Defence outputs is high for two reasons.
First, there have already been examples of the difficulty in meeting the full range of Military Tasks in addition to the demands of ongoing operations in Afghanistan. For example, the National Security Council has had to take risk against operations in Afghanistan to provide a military contribution to homeland tasks such as a response to a Mumbai-style attack and securing the 2012 Olympic Games (the political imperative for military contributions to homeland risks is likely to increase), and the recent re-deployment of HMS Cumberland to help evacuate British nationals from Libya gained much public attention as the ship was on her way to be decommissioned. Although FF20 and FR20 loom beyond operations in Afghanistan, capability cuts are likely to get worse as the 2011 and subsequent planning rounds take place, given the annual gap between the budget allocated to Defence in the Comprehensive Spending Review and commitments of between £1 billion and £2 billion. This will place further strain on the ability of the regular forces to perform tasks outlined in the SDSR.

It is therefore important for the government to be clearer about the discretionary versus non-discretionary tasks which the military must be able to undertake. Non-discretionary tasks are likely to be:

- Homeland security and resilience, including military responses to terrorism, cyber attack and civil contingencies
- Military power projection for the purposes of protecting British nationals and assets abroad, including in response to natural disasters and other crises
- Defence of the UK Overseas Territories, usually through deterrent presence
- Standing home and Alliance commitments.
The primary discretionary task will be conflict prevention activities in different countries. Each of these tasks is likely to be undertaken on an enduring basis or require high readiness levels, and will tend to be of small or medium scale.

This is confirmed by the MoD’s Future Character of Conflict (FCOC) work which states that the UK must be prepared to:

- Conduct humanitarian relief operations and non-combatant evacuations
- Deal with imminent terrorist attacks or threats to UK energy supplies
- Undertake focused coercive actions (such as raiding by special or specialised forces)
- Provide Military Assistance to the Civil Authorities at home, such as that being planned for the 2012 Olympics – a task which is more likely to be required than is currently envisaged
- Invest in conflict prevention and stabilisation, through early and continuous engagement
- Defend critical national infrastructure, including against cyber attacks
- Have the capability to deter and if necessary defend against WMD and computer network operations.

Moreover, FCOC placed significant emphasis on the need to improve (human) ‘understanding’: ‘things that have been regarded as supporting or enabling functions such as deep cultural understanding (which includes fluency in languages), Human Intelligence or Civil-Military Cooperation will, in this environment, be battle-defining’.

Secondly, the range of capabilities these tasks imply (in addition to core military power projection and crisis response) is extensive and often specialist. These include: the ability to operate in urban and littoral environments at home and abroad; the ability to understand how populations, urban environments and critical infrastructure function; the ability to influence populations; improved cultural understanding; investment in capacity building, which covers a range of areas such as security sector reform, disarmament and demobilisation, and essential sector reform; and an uplift in cyber expertise. It will be difficult for the regular forces to develop this range of capabilities while still maintaining high-end capabilities and meeting general duty and standing commitments. Contrary to previous policy, it will also be difficult to rely on other departments for these skills, so integration of alternative manpower will be required.

Summary
The UK cannot rely only on regular forces for routine, predictable missions regardless of the capabilities involved, and on the reserves only for a reinforcing role during large-scale deployments.
The DPAs do not provide a sufficient baseline for determining force structure and manpower mixes. They do not reflect the priorities and tasks in the National Security Strategy and the likely demands of the future strategic context in terms of the type, scale, range, frequency and concurrency of military activities. A revised construct is needed as Defence transitions to meet the aims of the National Security Strategy.

Furthermore, the SDSR continued to assume that each element of the FF20 will only need to be reinforced by other sources of manpower, usually when the DPAs are exceeded – not that alternative forms of manpower could become integral to achieving Defence outputs.

The baseline needs to be the likely defence and security tasks the military will be required to undertake both at home and abroad in the 2015-plus timeframe. These will be:

- A larger military contribution to homeland security and resilience including military responses to terrorism, cyber attack and civil contingencies
- Military power projection
- Standing home and alliance commitments
- Long-term conflict prevention.

Given the cuts the MoD is required to make, regular forces will increasingly have to rely on alternative forms of manpower to meet the core requirements of these tasks, which are likely to be small- and medium-scale, enduring and often require specialist skills. The reserve component should be integrated into Defence’s force development processes.

The capabilities demanded by future tasks and the future character of conflict will often be specialised. It will be difficult for the regular forces to develop this range of skills while still maintaining existing high-end capabilities and meeting general duty and standing commitments, so integration of alternative manpower will be required. The reserve component will not just augment the regular force in the future.

Reserve Forces can also be integrated with other departments and agencies, particularly for homeland and conflict prevention tasks.

There are two key questions regarding the future use of alternative forms of manpower for achieving Defence outputs. First, in what ways can different forms of manpower contribute to achieving core military capabilities and output? Secondly, in what ways can they help Defence meet the unique demands of the future character of conflict? In this respect, there are lessons from international partners for integrating alternative forms of manpower with regular structures.
Notes and References

1. The terrorist threat does, of course, have an international dimension but the National Security Strategy indicates a rebalancing between upstream and homeland investment.

2. These risks are: disruption to oil or gas supplies to the UK, or price instability, as a result of war, accident, major political upheaval or deliberate manipulation of supply by producers; a conventional attack by a state on another NATO or EU member to which the UK would have to respond; an attack on a UK Overseas Territory as the result of a sovereignty dispute or a wider regional conflict; and short- to medium-term disruption to international supplies of resources (for example, food and minerals) essential to the UK.


5. The government needs to identify priority countries to guide these longer-term deployments; a geographical ‘overlay’ for the National Security Risk Assessment, Military Tasks and Defence Planning Assumptions would be very useful.


7. Ibid., para. 21.

8. Ibid.

9. This is the most significant change from the 2009 Strategic Review of Reserves, which argued that ‘in future the Reserve is likely to be needed for augmentation as much as for maximum effort’ and also implied that the Reserve Forces contribution to manning the Whole Force was through manning shortfalls, providing niche elements of the Standing Capability, and providing contract and service support personnel – particularly when there was a degree of stretch.
III. International Comparisons

This section examines the approaches of three key partners which a number of senior officials indicated it would be most beneficial to look at: the US, Canada and Australia. Each has taken steps to integrate reserve components with their regular force structures by adopting ‘Total Force’ policies and there are lessons from these experiences. The use of contractors as an alternative source of manpower within the Total Force is addressed separately in Section V.

Drivers for Force Structure and Capability Requirements

Table 1 summarises the risks and strategic and military objectives which drive force structures for the US, Canada and Australia.

Each of these countries prioritises protection of the homeland (and supply chains) and support to civil authorities in their national strategic and military objectives. Apart from treaty obligations, operations abroad are discretionary and tend to reflect particular regional interests. The majority of tasks – and their scale – reflect particular country characteristics, notably larger populations, expansive landmasses and frequent natural disasters (which drive a larger and more formal/structured military unit contribution to homeland tasks) and geostrategic locations. This is the distinguishing factor from the UK.

Within these, the US, Canada and Australia are, like many other countries including the UK, increasingly prioritising ‘new’ capabilities areas, notably:

- Cyber-security
- Missile defence
- Space capabilities
- Counter-WMD
- Linguistic, regional and cultural ability.

The United States

The structure of the US reserve forces is complex:

- The army is made up of three elements: an Active Component, the Army National Guard and Army Reserve. The last two jointly make up the Reserve Component
- The air force is made up of three elements: an Active Component, the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve. The last two jointly make up the Reserve Component
- The navy is made up of two elements: an Active Component and a single Reserve Component (the Navy Reserve)
- The Marine Corps is made up of two elements: an Active Component and a single Reserve Component (the Marine Forces Reserve).
Table 1: National Strategic Objectives and Military Tasks of Selected Countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Threats and Challenges</strong></td>
<td>• Proliferation of WMDs, particularly nuclear</td>
<td>• International and regional instability from uneven resource access/economic distribution and build-up of conventional forces in Asia-Pacific countries</td>
<td>• Terrorism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Terrorism</td>
<td>• Proliferation of advanced and particularly CBRN weapons</td>
<td>• Natural disasters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Disruption and attack of space and cyberspace</td>
<td>• Natural disasters</td>
<td>• Terrorism/cyber-attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Dependence on fossil fuels</td>
<td>• Terrorism/ cyber-attack</td>
<td>• Outbreaks of infectious disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Climate change and global pandemics</td>
<td>• Global disasters</td>
<td>• Global criminal networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Regional insecurity from failing states</td>
<td>• Espionage and foreign interference, encroachment on Canadian natural resources</td>
<td>• Espionage and foreign interference, encroachment on Canadian natural resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Global criminal networks</td>
<td>• Future illegal activity in the Arctic</td>
<td>• Future illegal activity in the Arctic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic and Military Objectives: Home</strong></td>
<td>• Protect homeland including through: support of civil authorities; command and control; CBRN detection; engineering; communications; ground transportation; aviation; medical support; security; logistics; and maintenance¹</td>
<td>• Conduct daily domestic and continental operations, including in the Arctic and through NORAD</td>
<td>• Protect sovereignty of offshore domain, including territories and economic resources in remote northwestern part of primary operational environment; establish and maintain sea and air control, particularly in maritime and littoral approaches to the continent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Protect vital interests, including resource flows</td>
<td>• Support a major international event in Canada, such as the 2010 Olympics</td>
<td>• Support domestic security and emergency response efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Respond to a major terrorist attack</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Support civilian authorities during a crisis in Canada such as a natural disaster</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic and Military Objectives: Abroad</strong></td>
<td>• Meet wartime treaty obligations Remain engaged with allies and partner nations to build partner capacity in the interests of building regional stability and averting or mitigating future crises</td>
<td>• Lead and/or conduct a major international operation for an extended period</td>
<td>• Contribute to military contingencies in the Asia-Pacific region, including: humanitarian relief; disaster recovery; evacuation of nationals; counter-terrorism, counter-piracy and resource protection assistance to regional partners, including the protection of critical sea lanes; prepare to engage in conventional combat in the region, in coalition with others, in order to counter coercion or aggression against allies or partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Deploy forces in response to crises elsewhere in the world for shorter periods</td>
<td>• Contribute to stability and security in the South Pacific and East Timor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Contribute to military contingencies in support of global security</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The National Guard is unique from other components in that it must fulfil both federal and individual state roles: being a primary domestic responder as well as maintaining readiness for missions abroad. For state missions, the governor commands Guard forces through the state Adjutant General. Local or state-wide emergencies such as storms, fires, earthquakes or civil disturbances are examples of situations in which the governor would call the National Guard for assistance. In addition, the president can, and frequently does, activate the National Guard for participation in federal missions. In this case Guard units are commanded by the Combatant Commander of the theatre in which they are operating. Where individual members volunteer for service abroad outside of presidential direction, they require the approval of the state governor.

Each of the services tailors the Reserve Component (RC) to meet their requirements but the types of service are common to each:

1. Ready Reserve: includes members of both the Reserve and the National Guard in each service, organised as individuals or units. It maintains a pool of trained individuals and units that can be called to active duty should the need arise to augment active units. Members are required to be prepared for mobilisation or re-activation within a specified period of time. The Ready Reserve is made up of the Selected Reserve (who are involved in training each year), the Individual Ready Reserve (individuals who are fully trained or who have had previous active service) and the Inactive National Guard (National Guard members who are attached to a specific unit but do not participate in training)

2. Standby Reserve: includes those whose civilian jobs are classed as essential, or who have a disability or hardship, and therefore are not required to perform training and are not assigned to units. However, these individuals form a pool that may be mobilised at a later date and who have skills that are likely to be useful. Made up of the Active Status List and Inactive Status List

3. Retired Reserve: made up of officers and enlisted personnel who receive pay after retiring on the basis of previous duty.

Moreover, each service is subject to the Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC) of 2005 which aims to close excess military installations, realign total asset inventories to: reduce expenditures on operations and maintenance; better integrate active and reserve units; and improve co-operation between military service branches while training and fighting.

**Army Reserve Component**

Following the Vietnam War, the US Army adopted an integrated ‘Total Army’ concept whereby the two elements of the Reserve Component, the Army National Guard and Army Reserve, are part of the operational force.
### Table 2: Distribution of Capabilities across US Army Components (June 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Force</th>
<th>AC</th>
<th>ARNG</th>
<th>USAR</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operational Headquarters</td>
<td>15.4K</td>
<td>6.1K</td>
<td>0.2K</td>
<td>21.6K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commands and Centers</td>
<td>4.2K</td>
<td>1.4K</td>
<td>5.2K</td>
<td>10.8K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brigade Combat Teams</td>
<td>166.7K</td>
<td>99.2K</td>
<td>0.0K</td>
<td>265.9K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Functional Support Brigades</td>
<td>49.5K</td>
<td>42.6K</td>
<td>6.3K</td>
<td>98.3K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional Support Brigades</td>
<td>6.7K</td>
<td>13.0K</td>
<td>6.8K</td>
<td>26.5K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Echelons Above Brigade Combat</td>
<td>15.4K</td>
<td>24.4K</td>
<td>1.0K</td>
<td>40.8K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Echelons Above Brigade Combat Support</td>
<td>44.1K</td>
<td>68.0K</td>
<td>45.3K</td>
<td>157.4K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Echelons Above Brigade Combat Service Support</td>
<td>31.2K</td>
<td>44.7K</td>
<td>68.8K</td>
<td>144.6K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Functional Support Brigades</td>
<td>0.3K</td>
<td>2.7K</td>
<td>0.6K</td>
<td>3.6K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Forces/Civil Affairs/Psychological Operations</td>
<td>29.3K</td>
<td>5.6K</td>
<td>0.0K</td>
<td>39.4K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Forces/Civil Affairs/Psychological Operations</td>
<td>1.5K</td>
<td>0.0K</td>
<td>12.2K</td>
<td>13.6K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Operating Force Modification Table of Organization and Equipment and Table of Distribution and Allowances (Operating Force)</td>
<td>12.3K</td>
<td>2.1K</td>
<td>5.6K</td>
<td>20.0K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operational Force Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>376.6K</strong></td>
<td><strong>309.6K</strong></td>
<td><strong>151.9K</strong></td>
<td><strong>838.0K</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generating Force</td>
<td>91.4K</td>
<td>37.0K</td>
<td>43.3K</td>
<td>171.6K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Mobilization Augmentee</td>
<td>0.0K</td>
<td>0.0K</td>
<td>4.0K</td>
<td>4.0K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainee, Transient, Holdee, and Student (TTHS)</td>
<td>71K</td>
<td>8.0K</td>
<td>4.0K</td>
<td>83.0K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Generating Force Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>162.4K</strong></td>
<td><strong>45.0K</strong></td>
<td><strong>51.3K</strong></td>
<td><strong>258.6K</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Box 2: Lessons for the UK from the US Army Reserve Component

The most useful lessons are:
1. Having clearly identified, focused and resourced roles/tasks for the reserves
2. That reserve forces are most useful in the context of recurring or enduring tasks (whether as individuals or units)
3. Building within the reserve those capability packages that can be sustained at higher levels of readiness in an inactive duty status and deployed with a minimum of pre-deployment training
4. The need to manage individual mobilisations outside of home units to meet operational demands
5. The value of a force generation process that is flexible and able to pull together individuals to form ‘nonstandard units’ that are specifically constituted for missions, drawing on the unique skill sets held by reservists and others
6. Some capabilities do not require a separate or dedicated unit structure.

The US Army is able to use reserve units to provide whole combat and combat support capabilities because of the size and scale of its reserve component. The scale of the US Army’s Reserve Component also means that readiness issues can be managed more easily. These characteristics differentiate it from the UK’s equivalent force; the size and scale of the Territorial Army (TA) will make it difficult to develop reserve units of a size able to sustain high-end capabilities.

Unless the TA is increased in size (this might be explored in the context of the Army’s requirement to make 7,000 personnel redundant, by transferring personnel to alternative terms and conditions of service) and its basing changed, only sub-units are likely to be able to provide capabilities. These will tend to be in the combat support and combat service support functions.

The Army’s emerging ‘multi-role brigade’ concept represents an opportunity to integrate individual reservists and small reserve units into regular structures for operations both at home and abroad where there are specific capability gaps, or for reservists to provide whole capabilities if the Army is willing to accept any risk in relation to readiness. This risk would have to be managed by changing mobilisation and training requirements.

It should be stressed that the size and scale of the US Army’s Reserve Component means that reserve units undertake most training independently of their regular counterparts. This is in contrast to the Total Force approach of other countries which place emphasis on the need for joint and integrated training between regular and reserve components.
The UK can learn from the US Army’s Force Generation Process (ARFORGEN). Although ARFORGEN relies on a certain size and scale of both the Active and Reserve Components which the UK cannot match (and in relation to the homeland relies primarily on the National Guard structure), the overall approach effectively integrates reservists in a range of military tasks both at home and abroad and deserves to be explored in the context of FR20. The force generation model could also be used within the proposed Army structure of two deployable Divisions (one on ‘responsive’ duties or high readiness, and one on ‘adaptive’ duties or low readiness – see Figure 2).

**Figure 2:** New UK Army Structure.

The greatest obstacle to a Total Force policy is assured access to the reserve component. This is a function of legislation, which should be managed and if necessary changed to improve reserve readiness and mobilisation. It is also a function of Defence’s relationship with the private sector (see Section V).

A single, integrated personnel management system needs to underpin a Total Force approach.

This approach has been vindicated by recent operations, not least as a high operational tempo has blurred the distinction between active and reserve components. A recent review of the Army’s Reserve Component vindicated the total force policy and looked at how to remove obstacles to its achievement, most of which related to legislation, policy and personnel administration and management systems (including the difficulty in moving between different types of service).²

The principle behind the Total Army approach is for the Reserve Component to consist of ‘units identified, focused, resourced, and prepared for specific missions at home or abroad. RC units provide tailorable capabilities that are needed to meet diverse operational demands.’³ Both active and reserve
component units are modular, which means that capabilities align across the two components and also inevitably leads to the use of multi-component units under a single combatant commander. The emphasis is very much on the organisation and deployment of formed units, notwithstanding the notable increase in the number of individual soldiers volunteering for further active duty separate from their units and the tendency to cross-level across units at late stages in the force generation process due to operational demands (both trends have been criticised for negatively affecting the readiness and cohesion of units; the recent Reimer Study recommended moving away from these emerging practices). This is clear from Table 2, which identifies the distribution of capabilities across the army’s components. As examples: the Army National Guard provides 37 per cent of the army’s total combat capability and between 40 and 50 per cent of support functions; the Army Reserve provides the majority of combat service support functions, command and central functions, and general purpose civil affairs, psychological operations and media capabilities. Moving forward, there are suggestions that the Reserve Component should meet the US Army Europe’s requirement to maintain a presence in theatre, through the rotational deployment of brigade combat teams. This would be an enduring and predictable mission.

Notwithstanding this emphasis on large unit capability within the Reserve Component, there is a recent and notable trend for smaller elements to develop cultural and linguistic, provincial reconstruction and agricultural capabilities. These are examples of types of capabilities that do not require a separate or dedicated unit structure. The Reimer Study recommends taking this further and in a more structured way, by moving towards:

- ‘Theatre security co-operation brigades’ focused on a geographic combatant command to enhance the army’s ability to improve the security capacity of partner states. These units could be multi-component and structured around existing combat and manoeuvre brigades, and augmented with ‘non-organic’ units, teams or individuals such as civil affairs experts, military police, linguistic specialists and foreign area officers.

- Establishing ‘nonstandard stability units’ specifically constituted for missions. Current examples include human terrain teams, policy advisory teams, agricultural business teams. These units would be formed by selecting individuals with requisite skills at the beginning of the force generation process.

Finally, the Reimer Study proposed changes to the US Army’s Force Generation Process (ARFORGEN) in relation to the Reserve Component to better meet the demands of future homeland, deployed and contingency operations:
In the US, upon entering the ‘available’ pool, a reserve unit is allocated to a mission-specific Deployed Expeditionary Force (DEF) or a full-spectrum Contingency Expeditionary Force (CEF) to react to a global contingency.

The Reimer Study recommended that, within the Deployed Expeditionary Force, missions are sourced predominantly by the Active Component but should include proportional representation from the Reserve Component based on the requirement and the capabilities present in the reserve. Those DEF units in the ‘reset’ pool should be earmarked for homeland roles, primarily sourced from National Guard units but also proportionately from the Active Component and Army Reserve depending on the assessment of risk. Given that the homeland task is a ‘full spectrum’ one, these units could then transition to the CEF.

Within the CEF pool, the Reimer Study recommended that forces be structured into three bands: full-spectrum, Core Mission-Essential Task List operations and theatre flexibility. The first band would be composed primarily of Active Component capabilities; reservists may be required to fill a small number of gaps but would need to be trained for immediate deployment. The second band would include both active and reserve forces, trained and equipped for deployment on second and subsequent strategic lifts. Forces in the third band would provide strategic flexibility within the force generation process, and may be trained in specific cultural and other elements while waiting for deployment to provide immediate and longer-term benefit to Defence.

It is worth noting in this context that, under the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Act of 2005, the Army Reserve has constructed 125 new joint and multi-component reserve centres while closing 176 older Army Reserve faculties. This is part of the shift from being a strategic component to an operational force.

It is clear that the future direction of travel for the Reserve Component is to build capability packages that can be sustained at higher levels of readiness in an inactive duty status and deployed with a minimum of pre-deployment training. This is already the case with operational support functions and could be extended into newer areas essential to conflict prevention activities. Overall, clear, predictable, recurring and enduring tasks that capitalise on the unique environmental and skillsets within the reserve underpin the US Army’s Reserve Component. The challenge the US Army faces is maintaining unit cohesion in the context of significant operational demand at present.
It intends to emphasise the use of formed units in the future but is likely to constitute these units more flexibly than at present.

**Air Reserve Component**
The US Air Reserve Component consists of the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve. The component has also adopted a Total Force approach; the National Guard, Air Reserve and Regular Air Force have 150 ‘Total Force Integration’ initiatives across the service, whereby ‘associate units’ are formed by collocating Regular, Guard and Reserve units so that each shares aircraft, equipment and support responsibilities, bringing different capabilities and skills together in the right balance to deliver capability. However, this is a recent development and only small-scale at present (though likely to continue under BRAC 2005 and subsequent iterations):

- The Air Force Reserve has only seven associate units which share aircraft and so on with an active duty unit at present. It has thirty-five of its own wings and 620 mission support units. However, in addition to this pool of active airmen, the Air Force Reserve maintains the US Air Force’s ‘strategic depth’ of more than 760,000 stand-by or non-participating reservists and retirees that could be called up for national emergencies. It also managed 9,000 Individual Mobilisation Augmentees (IMAs) who are assigned to a regular unit. IMAs backfill positions vacated by regulars and/or perform their normal duties. They often bring specialist corporate and technical knowledge from

**Figure 3:** US Air Force ‘Total Force’ contributions.
their civilian careers and serve for either a minimum of twenty-four or thirty-six days a year. In total, the Reserve provides 17 per cent of the air force capability (support, maintenance and operations). It is also developing a cyber capability of 3,500 military, 900 civilian and 900 contractor personnel which supports twenty-four-hour cyber operations.

- The Air National Guard has eighty-nine flying units and 579 mission support units. The Guard’s weather flights support the US Air Force and Army National Guard and Army Reserve divisions and brigades. Civil engineer squadrons provide engineer and firefighter forces trained and equipped to deploy on short notice and other civil engineer squadrons provide self-sufficient, deployable civil engineer teams.

**Box 3: Lessons From the US Air Reserve Component for the UK**

The US Air Force is able to emphasise the organisation and deployment of formed reserve units because of its size and scale but also contributes individual augmentees. The Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAuxAF) is structured to deliver individual augmentees to expeditionary operations, usually in support functions, given the operational requirements of the RAF. It will be difficult for the RAuxAF to shift from augmenting the RAF in support roles to sustaining aircraft capabilities itself because of the limited training opportunities for operating complex systems.

The US Air Force’s use of Individual Mobilisation Augmentees is an example of best practice. This is already mirrored in the RAuxAF where the focus is on creating a trained manpower pool that can be paired with regular units, trained and deployed with them. The RAuxAF uses augmentees for force protection, helicopter and ISTAR support, medical, logistics, media, intelligence and HQ functions. It wants to extend this in a number of specialist areas, including CBRN, forward controller capability, movements specialists, intelligence analysis, cyber and policing. The RAuxAF is also making greater use of Auxiliaries on Full Time Reserve Service, Additional Duties Commitments and Volunteer ex-Regular Reserve. The Royal Navy likewise makes use of augmentees. These mechanisms could be explored in the Army for specialist, usually HQ, functions.

The concept of ‘associate units’ formed by integrating Regular and Reserve Units is an example of best practice. The RAuxAF and Royal Navy appear to achieve this already through their use of augmentees. The concept could be explored by the Army as part of the multi-role brigade concept by including TA sub-units in the construct. The risks to all services, however, are two-fold: recruiting and retaining sufficient numbers, and managing readiness (including mobilisation times and training).
to perform heavy repair and maintenance on air bases and remote sites. The primary sources of support for Air National Guard units are dual-status military technician and guardsmen on active duty, who are civil service employees of the federal government and military members and perform day-to-day management, administration and maintenance.⁷

Navy and Marine Corps Reserves

Although the Navy Reserve and Marine Corps Reserve are separate entities in the US, for the purposes of this paper they are considered in the same section.

In 2004, the Navy Reserve was restructured from the approach adopted in the Cold War to better support the Active Component by:⁹ providing a specific capability best filled by discrete units which the Active Component does not have; and providing individuals or portions of units that can augment existing active commands. The purpose of this change was to achieve active-reserve integration and therefore increase the war fighting capacity of the active force. The Navy Reserve provides 20 per cent of the navy’s total assets, including a principal surface combatant, mine warfare capability (two vessels), an inshore undersea warfare capability and significant logistics support. The Active Component now takes ownership of the Reserve, with individual active-duty commanding officers understanding they are responsible for the readiness of their supporting reserve forces. The Active Component defines what training levels the Reserve will meet, applies metrics to the required readiness levels and oversees training. In addition, reserve units that require tactical skills are now located in fleet concentration areas whereas those units in areas away from fleet assets are trained in non-perishable skills or trades that do not require frequent training with regular forces to achieve proficiency. Under BRAC 2005 (and subsequent iterations) this is likely to continue.

Furthermore, in the Navy Reserve there are two full-time service programmes which have proved to be valuable:

- **Navy Full-Time Support (FTS)** which allows reservists to perform full-time active duty service in positions that support the training and administration of the Navy Reserve Force. Members receive the same pay, allowances and benefits as active duty members. One advantage of FTS over regular active duty is that members typically serve for longer periods at any assigned locations

- **Navy Individual Augmentee (IA)** which allows Reservists to perform full-time active duty service in positions that support strategic objectives. Members may be chosen or volunteer to fill in, or augment, roles requiring specialised knowledge or skillsets. They could potentially fill needs outside the navy in any of the service branches.
The Future of the UK’s Reserve Forces

The purpose of the Marine Corps Reserve, which is the largest command in the Marine Corps, is fourfold: to augment and reinforce active Marine forces in time of war, national emergency or contingency operations; provide personnel and operational tempo relief for the active forces in peacetime; provide service to the community; and provide rapid response when called upon to alleviate the personnel and operational pressures on active forces.

Box 4: Lessons From the US Maritime Reserve Components for the UK

The RNR and RMR are already good at using reservists to fill hard and soft gaps in the ORBAT. The US Navy’s use of reserves to man technically complex platforms relies on the size of the Reserve Component.

All services can learn from the example of the US Navy Reserve’s integration with the Active Component, including having the regular force define what training levels the Reserve will meet; oversee that training; and apply metrics to the required readiness levels.

The Navy Individual Augmentee programme is interesting because it allows individuals to fill roles in other service branches. This flexible manpower model should be explored in further detail in a UK context.

There are potential lessons from the US Navy Reserve’s decision to co-locate reserve units in areas with regular force concentration.

The UK’s Reserve Forces can learn from the example of the US Marine Reserve’s role of providing service to the community. This was never taken forward following the 2009 Strategic Review of Reserves and could contribute to the government’s ‘Big Society’ ambition, if community engagement and presence is a formal task placed on Reserve Forces. If this is a formal task it will need to be balanced against the requirement for the reserves to be operational first and foremost. It could go against recommendations to co-locate regular and reserve units, with value for money implications. Alternatively, societal engagement and understanding of Defence could be a by-product of involvement in homeland security and resilience tasks or achieved through other mechanisms such as better national and local government-level communication of the Reserve Forces (see also Section IV).

Canada

The Canadian Reserve Force is composed of four sub-components:

1. Primary Reserve: this is the largest component. Members are trained regularly on a part-time basis. They may occasionally do full-time service. The Primary Reserve consists of the Naval Reserve, the
Army Reserve and Air Reserve. Each component is operationally and administratively responsible to its corresponding environmental command

2. Cadet Instructors Cadre: This reserve component is aimed at developing leadership skills amongst Canadian youth, concurrent to a developing interest in the Canadian forces

3. Supplementary Reserve: This group is composed of former regular and reserve forces members. There is no regular training requirement, but these personnel can be called into duty in the event of an emergency

4. Canadian Rangers: This is a voluntary force that provides a military presence in the far north, the coastal and more isolated areas of Canada that do not benefit from the constant presence of regular Canadian Forces.

For the purposes of this report, it is the Primary Reserve that is of most interest given that it has a direct role in Canada’s Defence mission. Within the Primary Reserve there are three categories or forms of employment:

- Class A: members are employed on a part-time basis within their unit and limited to a number of paid days a year
- Class B: reservists employed full-time in non-operational capacities. These personnel receive many of the same benefits as regular forces but 85 per cent of the pay of their counterparts
- Class C: the operational level of employment. Reservists receive pay at the level of regular personnel and all benefits. Examples include deployments in operational areas and core crew positions on warships.

Since 1987 the Canadian Government has adopted a Total Force policy, whereby reservists are trained to the level of and interchangeable with their regular force counterparts. Many occupational standards and skill requirements are the same for both regular and reserve personnel. The benefit of this approach is that reservists can fill and augment operational positions with little additional training.

The principal role of the Primary Reserve is the augmentation, sustainment and support of deployed forces to allow Canada to achieve the capabilities it requires. Its secondary roles are to provide a base for expansion and act as a link to communities. Within the Total Force approach, both the regular and reserve forces also support ongoing peacetime tasks and activities. In some cases, reserves are responsible for tasks that are not performed by regular forces.
Naval Reserve
The Naval Reserve is responsible for augmenting the regular navy and providing a naval presence in communities. It also has a number of specific roles assigned to it, including:

- Manning of maritime coastal defence vessels on a continuous basis for the purposes of training, route survey, mine countermeasures, fisheries patrols, coastal area surveillance, boarding of suspicious or violating vessels
- Naval control of shipping units which provide advice and information to merchant shipping and regular commanders
- Port security and harbour defence units which provide harbour patrol and enforcement in rigid inflatable boats, monitor vessel traffic in harbour areas and inspect port facilities.

Army Reserve
The Army Reserve provides a framework for mobilisation, augmentation and sustainment of the regular army. Augmentation and sustainment are based on individual and platoon activity, with unit taskings used only as a basis for mobilisation (in addition to training and administration). In addition, the reserve serves as a link to communities. More recently, the role of the reserve has evolved to include the provision of specific capacities such as CBRN response, civil-military co-operation psychological operations and general support roles (at theatre level) including transport, supply, maintenance, engineers, medical, decontamination and administration. This development represents a significant increase in the force generation responsibilities of the Army Reserve to include the provision of unique capabilities not available in regular components by reserve units as well as the provision of reinforcements.

Air Reserve
The Air Reserve provides operational manning and backfill for deployed regular air force personnel. All air force units are total force, with members of the Air Reserve employed, primarily on a part-time basis, alongside their counterparts at air force wings, squadrons and units. Reservists are also fully integrated with regular and civilian staff at headquarters establishments and provide the majority of project staffing functions. The requirement for air reservists to meet total force training standards reflects the fact that personnel are expected to maintain a high level of readiness to fulfil the day-to-day tasks of the air force. Although most air environment and support occupations are open to all applicants, for some occupations (for example, pilot) the air force targets already qualified personnel. That could include former members of the Regular Force, or civilian candidates whose qualifications equate to those of the applicable military trades. This is primarily to avoid the problems inherent in attempting to train and
develop large numbers of part-time personnel to regular force standards. The net result of this is for the Air Reserve to be made up primarily of former members of the Regular Force.

Canada’s Total Force approach is enabled by an integrated regular-reserve force development process made up of a number of elements, including:

- Clear roles, missions and tasks for each Reserve Unit
- Defined capability outputs
- Harmonised training and capabilities
- A single chain of command
- Policy alignments for benefits and compensation
- Managed readiness
- Reserve participation at all levels of command.

Furthermore, resources need to be allocated to the Reserve Force to allow it to achieve and maintain an integrated capability and competency.

**Box 5: Lessons From Canada’s Total Force Approach for the UK**

- The need for an integrated force development process and chain of command
- The need for clearly defined roles, missions and capability outputs for all aspects of the Reserve Force
- The value of common occupational, skills and training standards for both regular and reserve personnel
- The value of using the same equipment in both the regular and reserve components
- Common training standards mean that the readiness of the Reserve Forces will be high
- The need to align benefit and compensation levels between Regular and Reserve Forces
- In a maritime environment, the ability of reserves to own and operate capabilities which are not technologically complex and are ‘low intensity’. This has parallels with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and Volunteer Coastguard Rescue Officers
- In the land and air environments, the value of unit organisation for training and administration purposes
- In the land environment, the utility of individual and platoon-level augmentation of regular forces – except where there are unique capabilities not available in regular components that need to be developed within specialist units.
**Australia**

The strategic role for the Reserves changed in 2000 from expansion and mobilisation to that of supporting and sustaining the types of contemporary military operations in which the Australian Defence Force may be increasingly engaged.

The reserves are embedded within the navy, army and air force. There is no delineation between the operations in which the permanent force members and reserve members may be involved.

- The Naval and Air Force Reserves are highly integrated within their respective services; reservists are used primarily to augment permanent force units and ships, being allocated to vacancies alongside their permanent force counterparts.
- The Army Reserve, in contrast, is primarily structured along similar lines to the regular army, with most active reservists serving in reserve brigades and units.

All units, ships and personnel are maintained at given readiness notices for deployment. These vary depending on the role of the unit and the skills of the individual. There are six categories:

1. High Readiness Active Reserve, which has higher training and service obligations
2. High Readiness Specialist Reserve, usually medical professionals
3. A Specialist Reserve
4. An Active Reserve
5. A Standby Reserve, with no set annual training commitment but available when needed in times of crisis
6. Other categories as determined by service chiefs.

Training is divided into individual and collective training, with most individual training contributing to individual readiness requirements. All training within the Australian Defence Force, whether for permanent force members or reserve members, is conducted to the same standards.

It is particularly noteworthy that reservists can move between the different categories of reserve and from part-time to full-time service at different stages of their career to undertake specific duties or to participate in operational deployments, and then return to their civilian vocation. This is the ambition behind the MoD’s ‘New Employment Model’ (NEM) which proposes flexible structures, more segmented careers, categories of readiness, a mix of Regular and Reserves with graduated commitment, within a tri-service structure, and with options for full- and part-time working which assumes a ‘combatant first, specialist second’ principle. Given sufficient direction, the NEM (with
Box 6: A Strategic Vision for Defence Support

A UK Defence Support Review paper, ‘A Strategic Vision for Defence Support’ (November 2010), noted the following factors that should be taken into account when developing a flexible employment model and associated terms and conditions of service:

**Agility Between Regulars and Reserves**
Improving the ability for service personnel to move between the regular and reserve components and providing enabling pathways into civilian employment could improve the development of individual and team skills and the understanding of operational requirements. The more agility is increased, though, the more complex the issues for management become. It would be simplistic to envision a seamless movement from regular to reserve to civilian and back and all options in between. Movement between any service commitment and career stream might have to be voluntary although NEM, supported by the appropriate terms and conditions of service (TACOS), could introduce control points that present a choice which influences behaviour.

**Agility Within Regulars and Reserves**
Enlistment or commissioning into a career construct which allows movement between levels of commitment in different groups whilst remaining on the same set of TACOS (e.g. regular TACOS) would increase flexibility. However, it would be complex to manage, could threaten regular manning requirements, and could be seen to undermine the current Regular offer, unless TACOS were maintained at a high and probably costly level.

**Civilian/Military Mix, But With a ‘Firewall’ of TACOS**
A mix of personnel on separate military and civilian TACOS reflects existing practice and could be the most pragmatic way forward. This would avoid complex problems of individuals transferring from one commitment/TACOS to another or having to provide potentially expensive ‘catch-all’ TACOS which fit every type of employment. This makes management simpler as some are provided from the military population and some are provided from the civilian pool, managed as separate entities.

**Volunteer Reserves Graduated Commitment Mechanism**
Numbers in each step of readiness are driven by the Operational Commitments Plot. The Graduated Commitment Mechanism (GCM) is an enduring mechanism for Land Forces, which after Operation Herrick will match TA cohorts to their Regular counterparts in the Force Operations and Readiness Mechanism. This model envisages separating routine trades (which can achieve enlistment to mobilisation within three years) from specialist trades of individuals who are qualified by dint of their civilian employment (for example, medics).
associated changes to the Joint Personnel Administration system) could be used to improve training opportunities, and provide greater cohesion between regular and reserve components.

It should, of course, be noted that the Australian government is undertaking a review of its Reserve Forces at present. A number of trends are already evident as part of this review:

- The need to review how high readiness is achieved and can be generated more effectively, including conditions of service, training and preparedness
- How to expand the general reserve and add to its skills base while cutting costs. Regular members who have completed full-time service are likely to be encouraged to transfer to the reserve; this will reduce training requirements and costs
- The need to define the specialist and technical functions the reserve should provide
- The requirement to assess and record civilian qualifications and experiences of reservists to fill skills shortages

Box 7: Lessons From Australia’s Reserve Forces for the UK

- The value of conducting reserve and regular force training to the same standards
- The utility of defining readiness requirements for all components of the Reserve Forces. It is possible to have high readiness reserves but these are difficult to generate
- The value of flexible terms and conditions of service that allow individuals to move between different categories of employment at different times during their careers. At the very least policies and compensation/benefit levels should be brought into line between regular and reserve components to ease any transfers. The MoD’s work on a New Employment Model should continue and underpin a flexible force generation process
- The need to define the specialist functions the reserve should provide
- The value of assessing and recording civilian qualifications and skills which can contribute to Defence outputs
- Encouraging Regular Forces to transfer to the reserve
- The potential for using different mixes of manpower to achieve a capability.
- The potential for industry to provide new and innovative forms of manpower.

- The value of developing sponsored reserve schemes with industry bodies
- The utility of integrating different forms of manpower in the same
units to maintain capability but reduce costs.

Summary
It is clear that the capability provided by Reserve Forces improves when they are trained, mobilised and integrated with Regular Forces properly – and vice versa. To date, the UK’s ambition for a Total Force has been interpreted narrowly and progress towards it has varied between the services. The army has taken limited steps to more closely align TA units with their regular counterparts for the purposes of training (see footnote 16), though the RAF and RAuxAF have made greater strides by sharing a chain of command, being collocated and having regular commanders direct reserve output. The Royal Navy and Royal Naval Reserve are also moving in this latter direction. To an extent, the 2009 Strategic Review of Reserves also reflected this narrow interpretation by suggesting that: ‘Defence should consider how best to adjust the balance of liability, roles and readiness within and between the Regular and Reserve Forces. Defence should also establish a mechanism to maximise the delivery of niche capabilities across the Reserve’. It went on to say that ‘in future the Reserve is likely to be needed for augmentation as much as for maximum effort’ and that the reserve contribution to manning the whole force was through Manning shortfalls, providing niche elements of the standing capability, and providing contract and service support personnel – particularly when there was a degree of stretch. This was not a clear statement of direction about integrating different force components. Debates about formed units versus individual augmentees have continued; both ignore the sophisticated (and perhaps even subtle) rationale behind Total or Whole Force policies.

Analysis of the lessons and best practice from the Total Force approaches of the US, Canada and Australia identifies that, as the UK takes its Whole Force concept forward, emphasis should be placed on:

1. Adequate force development
2. Developing an intelligent force generation process to meet the specific requirements of different tasks.

These, rather than identifying a precise, fixed structure for reserve forces per se. The use of individual reservists versus formed reserve units – or the balance between the two – will vary between the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force and, perhaps more importantly, by task.

Based on the experience of the US, Canada and Australia, effective force development and generation for a Whole Force are enabled by the following factors:

- The Volunteer Reserve will not just augment or fill gaps in the regular force in the future. Nor will it be useful to provide discrete capabilities
The Future of the UK’s Reserve Forces

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if these are not driven by, and integrated into, overall military tasks and assumptions. The reserve will be integral to Defence structures and outputs and must be integrated with regular components. This is as much a cultural change, requiring leadership, as it is about organisational and structural changes

• All Reserve Forces must have clearly defined roles and tasks. It is best if these roles and tasks are ongoing or recurring

• The homeland security mission will become increasingly important and require a more formal and structured contribution from the armed forces. How the reserves are structured for this will be a function of the capacity of other responders (emergency services and so on), the skills and capabilities demanded of the armed forces (specialist versus general duty or formed manpower), the contribution made by the regular forces, and geographical location

• An integrated force development process for the regular and reserve forces should be developed which includes integrated regular/reserve formations, chains of command and training. The regular force should define what training levels the Reserve will meet; oversee that training; and determine the required readiness levels. (This is a step-change from the definition of integration used by the MoD – ‘an intelligent and dynamic relationship that enables Reserve Forces to share assets and resources, where appropriate with Regular Forces, and yet maintain a distinct volunteer ethos’\textsuperscript{11} – which implies that ‘sharing’ is ‘integration’ and also does not focus on defence and security tasks or outputs to be achieved)

• The need for common occupational, skills and training standards for both regular and reserve personnel and using the same equipment in both the regular and reserve components

• The Reserves should build capability packages that can be sustained at higher levels of readiness in an inactive duty status and deployed with a minimum of pre-deployment training. This points towards non-complex platforms and systems, or specialist capabilities that draw on civilian skills and are not held within the regular component.

Integration of individuals and sub-units into regular structures both have a role to play; the balance between the two will differ from task to task:

• The demand for particular specialist skills from the reserves is likely to be higher than the demand for general duty manpower or the provision of ‘platforms’, unless the scale of Reserve Forces is such that units are designated (and able) to provide a certain scale of formed capability at high readiness\textsuperscript{12}

• Individual reservists are able to contribute unique and specialist skills that, when integrated with regular units and other departments and agencies, or combined to form a specialist team/unit, can meet the
bespoke requirements of future operations. In this sense the term ‘augmentation’ does not capture the full contribution of reservists to the regular force

• Generally, it will be easier for individuals rather than reserve units or sub-units to deploy quickly in response to urgent requirements. Individuals can have higher readiness levels depending on their personal circumstances and existing skillset. It would be valuable for Defence to assess and record civilian qualifications and skills which can contribute to Defence outputs and perhaps also to recruit people specifically for these skills and qualifications

• Even at lower readiness levels, it will be difficult for reserve units to maintain full-spectrum capabilities where the complexity of modern systems is high and, as a result, the levels of training and use required to maintain proficiency are substantial. Contracts with industry might help overcome this to develop and maintain expertise in cybersecurity, ISTAR and other technical areas

• Reserve sub-units could, however, maintain capabilities in less technically complex areas such as combat support and combat service support more easily. Moving these to the reserve will depend on the willingness of the regular force to accept risk against readiness; there would likely be a demand for improved readiness by changing mobilisation times and increasing training days. The RAF and RN have been better at integrating regular and reserve elements compared to the Army but the Multi-Role Brigade concept now represents a real opportunity

• Alternatively, sub-units could easily perform ‘low intensity’ tasks. There are notable examples of this in the maritime domain in other countries

• Units primarily have administrative and training (that is, force development) value

• Industry could help to meet the requirement to maintain high technology capabilities at appropriate readiness. Existing mechanisms such as Sponsored Reserves have readiness requirements included within contracts, though their extension to capability areas beyond the support area is dependent on the threat environment and the level of risk both government and companies are willing to accept

• Personnel management, policies and training standards need to be common across the regular and reserve components. This improves readiness and allows individuals to move between different categories of service. There is virtue in harmonising policies terms and conditions of service but an integrated personnel management system would be more useful.

However, transitioning to a Total Force policy successfully is dependent on recruiting and retaining sufficient numbers of people. It is therefore important
to explore the social context within which Defence operates. Moreover, there is an opportunity to lessen the impact of redundancies by encouraging individuals to transfer to the Volunteer Reserve, where they could cost less (see Section VI) but still contribute to Defence outputs. Any challenges with sustaining voluntary service could also be mitigated by developing ways for the private sector to contribute new and innovative forms of manpower to Defence outputs, for example by extending existing concepts such as Sponsored Reserves. This is part of the rationale behind the ongoing Total Support Force work but what is the appetite within industry? The following sections address these two areas.

Notes and References

1. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, there was a debate about the role of the National Guard at home versus abroad as many Guardsmen were deployed on operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and could not help with the emergency response in the US.


3. Ibid., p. 2.

4. It is worth noting in this context that, under the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Act of 2005, the Army Reserve has constructed 125 new joint and multi-component reserve centres while closing 176 older Army Reserve faculties, and cut down from ten Regional Readiness Commands to four Regional Support Commands. This is part of the shift from being a strategic component to an operational force that better supports the regular component and reduces overheads. National Guard Units have also been subject to significant realignment.


6. Ibid., p. 49. These activities also draw on the transferrable skills used by the Army National Guard in a homeland setting.

7. The Air Reserve consists of 2,662 full-time Active Guard Reserve members, 10,867 full-time air reserve technicians, 511 Regular Air Force airmen and 4,157 civilian employees.

8. This would be a step beyond the attempt to integrate the TA more closely with its regular counterparts by pairing TA units with up to three regular ones (a primary affiliation with a regiment it is due to reinforce for a large-scale operation; a secondary affiliation where the unit is geographically distant from its primary affiliation; and a tertiary affiliation for general purpose training where a unit is unable to train with its secondary affiliation). The purpose of this pairing was to provide more opportunity for regulars and reserves...
to train together and provide reservists with greater access to equipment used on operations.


10. There are four types of reserve service in Australia:
   1. Ordinary service undertaken as Reserve days. This includes activities such as annual exercises, weekend training and those courses undertaken as part of normal peacetime service
   2. Voluntary continuous full-time service undertaken on an unprotected basis
   3. Voluntary continuous full-time service, which has been designated as protected
   4. Compulsory continuous full-time service following call out by the Governor General under certain circumstances.


12. As an example in the homeland context, it is worth noting the conclusions of the 2009 Strategic Review of Reserves in relation to UK operations. Civil Contingency Reaction Forces (CCRFs) were established to structure the reserve contribution to homeland security and resilience tasks. However:
   • The CCRF requirement did not see an increase in liability: it was a supplementary task for existing Reserve Forces, and largely focussed on the TA
   • CCRFs were seen as an administrative burden
   • No clear requirement had been placed on Defence to support resilience
   • There was no clear statement of output
   • The mechanism for mobilising CCRFs for UK operations was complicated and torturous
   • Perhaps more importantly, reserves were used as a pool of disciplined manpower to work alongside civil authorities or undertake unskilled tasks but the real requirement lay in logistics management and other specialist skills in addition to some General Duties. The CCRFs did not target reservist skills but simply produced a pool of manpower
   • The Review therefore abandoned CCRFs and declared all reservists available for homeland tasks. This analysis clearly points to the need for an adequate and intelligent force generation and tasking process.
IV. Society and Volunteering

The UK has a well-established tradition of volunteering which the coalition government is supporting and wants to extend through its ‘Big Society’ agenda. According to statistics from the Office of the Third Sector (now the Office for Civil Society), over half the population volunteer formally or informally at least once a month. Annual growth in volunteering has tended to be in the region of 500,000 people.¹

‘Volunteering’ in this sense is defined as unpaid help given to groups, clubs or organisations to benefit others or the environment. This definition of course lacks granularity – for example, about the benefits volunteers receive themselves (and therefore issues of motivation). Moreover, it is not strictly applicable to the Reserve Forces in two senses. First, reservists do receive pay in addition to other benefits. Secondly, volunteering is a discretionary activity and also does not need to take place within a formal structure, which contrasts to the terms of reservist service. Interestingly, the recent Reimer Study into the future of the US Army’s Reserve Component noted in this context that extensive use of volunteerism ‘threatens to distort the very nature of [Reserve Component] service in an all-volunteer force. Volunteerism is inherent in very nature of reserve forces. But uncontrolled and unmanaged volunteerism and extensive use of volunteers in lieu of standing mobilisation sets a dangerous precedent and begins to require [the active consent of an individual for deployment]’.²

Notwithstanding these nuances, it is notable that the UK and other countries – including those analysed above, namely the US, Canada, and Australia – have always struggled with recruiting and retaining sufficient reservists, with high annual turnover in reserve components as a result. Given the volunteering tradition and spirit that exists within the UK this challenge would, at face value, seem relatively easy to overcome. It is worth asking how the Ministry of Defence and single services can incentivise, sustain and harness individuals who are interested in volunteering to contribute to Defence outputs. The purpose of this section is to identify best practice from two areas where the government relies on volunteerism – the Civil Contingencies Secretariat’s work on community resilience and the Stabilisation Unit’s Civilian Stabilisation Group – to see whether there are lessons that can be applied to Defence for encouraging involvement in and managing the Reserve Forces. Later sections look at how this best practice should be included in the Military Covenant.

Community Resilience

‘Community resilience’ is defined as ‘communities and individuals harnessing local resources and expertise to help themselves in an emergency, in a way that complements the response of the emergency services’.³
government’s current focus is on removing those barriers which inhibit or prevent participation in community resilience at a local level. To achieve this, it needs to identify what the characteristics of a successful ‘resilient community’ are; understand the motivations of people becoming involved in community resilience activities and why people remain involved; and identify barriers to participation and where government has a role in enabling voluntary activity.

The Characteristics of a ‘Resilient Community’

The Strategic National Framework for Community Resilience has identified a number of characteristics of successfully resilient communities, of which the following have most applicability or cross-over to the debate about the future of the Reserves:

- People in resilient communities use their existing skills, knowledge and resources to prepare for, and deal with, the consequences of emergencies or major incidents
- They adapt their everyday skills and use them in extraordinary circumstances. Communities need to be flexible and scalable to respond to a wide range of events
- The resilient community has a champion, someone who communicates the benefits of community resilience to a wider community. Community resilience champions use their skills and enthusiasm to motivate and encourage others to get involved
- Resilient communities work in partnership with the emergency services their local authority and other relevant organisations before, during and after an emergency. These relationships ensure that community resilience activities complement the work of the emergency services and can be undertaken safely.

A previous consultation in this area also identified the following features of resilient communities:

- A sense of ownership of their activities
- Community leadership
- A clear understanding of roles and responsibilities
- Effective communication between communities and government.

Motivations for Community Resilience

The Civil Contingencies Secretariat relies on ‘self-selecting’ communities, recognising that it will not get everyone involved. These can be geographical communities (people who live in a particular, usually small, area); communities of ‘interest’; communities of ‘supporters’ (those with some professional interest in the area); and communities of ‘circumstance’ (those who become involved because they are affected by a crisis). Research
has identified a range of motivation for individuals becoming involved in community resilience activities (see Table 3).^6

**Table 3: What Motivates an Individual to Become Involved in Community Resilience Activities?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal/family motivation</td>
<td>- Protecting the safety of oneself and one’s family is a powerful motivator (there are linkages to a homeland security role for the armed forces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Perceived as a way of doing something out of the ordinary, a chance to break with normal routine, meet new people and experience the fellowship that results from working towards a common goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- A sense of altruism; a desire to help those around us and give something back to the community and country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Some participants in community resilience activities may already be involved in other voluntary activities and could be motivated by an overall desire to help others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The possibility of receiving reward or status, a sense of ‘glamour’ from being involved with the work of the authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of existing and development of further knowledge or skills</td>
<td>- People may be motivated to use their local knowledge and experience to serve their community and country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- People may have an existing skill or hobby which they are able to apply. These could be specialist or professional skills. These could also be everyday skills such as people management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External factors</td>
<td>- Clear and concise communication from government and the media about why and how individuals can get involved, particularly in respect of those groups who feel they do not know where to start</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The factors which maintain interest in voluntary community activity are as diverse as those which motivate initial participation. They principally include personal factors, regular training, achievements, information/communication and a number of external factors (see Table 4).
**Table 4: What Factors Sustain an Individual’s Involvement in Community Resilience Activities?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Personal factors</strong></th>
<th>The length of individual commitment will depend largely on personal circumstances. If time, family commitments, and financial resources suit the role being asked of individuals, they are more likely to commit for the long-term. A sense of ownership of the role can also act as a motivator for ongoing commitment.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regular training</strong></td>
<td>The continual development of individual skills through a programme of regular training will not only improve effectiveness but also keep participants engaged in the absence of formal deployments. Regular training, particularly towards accreditation, will encourage ongoing commitment as the skills may be beneficial in other aspects of an individual’s life, such as family or work. The opportunity to take part in activities with professional, full-time authorities may also act as an incentive to ongoing commitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Achievements</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrable progress can be a useful tool in maintaining commitment, for example by showing improved capabilities or completion of a training programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information/communication</strong></td>
<td>Regular communication to participants is key to maintaining commitment. This could be an email, phone call or newsletter relaying the latest news or event. A two-way dialogue with the responder community is also important in keeping communities engaged as it enables them to work in concert with the emergency services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **External factors** | Community leaders can use their visibility and enthusiasm to act as advocates for community resilience. This may encourage those involved to sustain their interest. Community leaders can use their visibility and enthusiasm to act as advocates for community resilience. This may encourage those involved to sustain their interest. Local, regional and national PR campaigns will encourage ongoing participation particularly if these receive positive media support. Such campaigns may benefit from the endorsement of a celebrity or other high profile figure. Reward and recognition can act as both a way of motivating individuals to become involved and maintaining their involvement. However, in some cases overt reward and recognition may have the effect of discouraging those who wish to participate without being singled out for praise and reward. Reward and recognition could come from a variety of sources:  
  - National, including a range of pre-existing schemes such as formal honours or ‘Pride of Britain’ style, publicly nominated schemes. Many larger voluntary sector organisations incorporate national reward schemes into their work, such as the Scout Association’s badge scheme.  
  - Local/regional awards  
  - Community rewards, such as social events to celebrate achievements or locally focused awards which could involve recognition from local dignitaries including mayors, elected members  
  - Personal rewards. Some individuals may feel rewarded by the fact that they have been involved in helping their community and country. Similarly, a defined programme of skills development may be sufficient to maintain the motivations of some individuals. |
Barriers to Community Resilience
The barriers to involvement in voluntary activities at community level are, unsurprisingly, often the opposite of motivational factors, including:

- Misunderstanding of government policy and intentions
- Difficulty understanding the language and terminology used by the government (including Defence)
- Responder organisations that are unaware of planned community resilience activities may be less able to accommodate community resilience work during their response and recovery to an incident, which in turn may act as a barrier for those involved. This has direct parallels to Defence and indicates the importance of integrating regular and reserve forces
- A lack of information about how to get involved
- A lack of time and funding, both on the part of individuals and the organisations they want to work with.

Civilian Stabilisation Group
In March 2008, the government committed to establishing a 1,000 strong civilian capacity for future stabilisation and conflict prevention tasks. The Civilian Stabilisation Group (CSG) was launched in December 2009. It is a reserve civilian capability made up of a pool of skilled individuals who are willing and able to deploy to fragile and conflict-affected countries, often at short notice. The CSG is made up of over 800 Deployable Civilian Experts and over 200 members of the Civil Service Stabilisation Cadre (from thirty government departments and agencies). There are potential lessons from the group for how the Ministry of Defence and armed forces should manage and sustain a reserve component.

Individuals were recruited through open competition and required to have existing skills and expertise in areas such as project management, communications, infrastructure, justice, disarmament, policing, institutional reform, health, public finance, agriculture and stabilisation. The attraction of becoming a member of the CSG is the opportunity to deploy to geographically diverse and challenging environments, working with a wide range of department agencies, partner countries and international organisations. It is argued that the group is cost effective, as members are paid only when they are actively working: the approach combines speed of response with a ‘pay only for use’ principle.
The Stabilisation Unit is responsible for managing and administering the CSG by:

- Developing, articulating and circulating the skills and experience requirement for deployed postings in conjunction with frontline units, departments and agencies
- Managing the selection process for deployed postings, both through open competition and by earmarking particularly well suited individuals (who still have to volunteer to apply for the posting)
- Providing constant training and learning for members – not just mission-specific training prior to deployment but throughout the year through lectures, seminars and online tools to share best practice and ideas. This maintains interest, contact with individuals and creates a distinct community. The Stabilisation Unit has also created the Stabilisation Volunteer Network, which is an association of organisations (both government and non-government, commercial, academic and voluntary) to enhance the skills and competencies of CSG members through placements and training, and further knowledge and information sharing. For example, placements of

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**Box 8: Lessons From the Community Resilience Sector for the UK’s Reserve Forces**

The government should:

- Recruit people into the reserves for their existing skills, and use these skills to contribute to Defence outputs. This would not only reduce training costs for Defence but also give individuals a sense of ownership
- Ensure that the reserves are integrated fully with their regular counterparts, including for training and exercising, and provide command opportunities at all levels
- Ensure that training is undertaken on a regular basis
- Improve career planning for reservists
- Identify opportunities for reservists to develop additional formal skills that will be beneficial in their civilian life
- Improve communication with reservists about the demands that will be placed on them
- Improve the profile and visibility of the Reserve Forces at national and local level, including encouraging local communities to recognise, honour and celebrate reserve service
- Furthermore, the government should capitalise on the motivation people have for protecting themselves, their families and communities to recruit individuals into the Reserve Forces for homeland security and resilience tasks. As these skills are transferable, opportunities will present themselves later on for individuals to use the skills in another context.
individuals in local government authorities have been used to develop competences in particularly challenging and specialist areas such as community engagement and preventing violent extremism

- Ensuring that training is increasingly undertaken jointly with the military (and in particular the Military Support to Stabilisation Group). For example, the recent ‘Exercise Civil Bridge’ involved integrated civilian-military teams operating in Uganda
- Looking after health and welfare issues pre deployment, during deployment and post deployment
- Debriefing individuals after their deployment to aid career development.

Box 9: Lessons from the Civilian Stabilisation Group for the UK’s Reserve Forces

None of this is to suggest that the CSG civilian reserve is a model for the Reserve Forces or that the two are in competition with each other, but the CSG is one example of best practice in how to manage a reserve capacity, including against high readiness requirements. It demonstrates that:

- Individuals can achieve high levels of readiness more easily than units. But individuals can be brought together to form a unit
- It is very valuable to articulate a clear requirement of the roles and skills required both for the recruitment of individuals into a reserve and for their deployment on operations
- Constant training and learning opportunities are required
- It is necessary to manage welfare and health issues throughout an individual’s period of service, not only when deployed on operations
- More investment and effort needs to go into individual career development
- Individuals are enthusiastic about working with a wide range of organisations. Opportunities for regular training, exercising and deployment with regular forces are therefore important.

Moreover, and drawing on CSG’s concept of the Stabilisation Volunteer Network, there could be merit in linking the Reserve Forces to local voluntary organisations, academic institutions and companies, including organisations like the RNLI, to aid recruitment and to sustain and develop individual skills (on this last point about the private sector, see also Section V).
The Military Covenant: How Should It Cater for the Reserves?

Many of these lessons were alluded to, or implied by, the ‘Proposition for the Reserve Forces’ set out in the 2009 Strategic Review of Reserves, which stated that ‘Defence will offer the challenge and reward which attracts people to volunteer, and undertakes to train and support them throughout their Service, including when mobilised and recuperating’.

Factors Affecting the Well-being and Retention of Reservists

It is clear that the current ‘offer’ to the reserves is confused and lacks heart. A significant amount of research confirms this, though it should be noted that this research primarily relates to the land environment (as the TA is the largest component of the Volunteer Reserve) and that further, systematic work should be undertaken in relation to the air and maritime reserve components.

Recent MoD research has shown that the three key drivers for people to leave the reserves are poor administration and management, poor training, and conflicts with family and job demands. Independent research has shown that many UK reservists leave primarily because of poor military family welfare support. These findings about the importance of the relationship between family support and retention of reservists were mirrored in a 2008 study of the US National Guard.

Moreover, epidemiological work has shown that UK reservists who deploy on operations appear to suffer worse mental health compared with regulars. US figures show that even if mental health issues do not surface immediately post-deployment, there is a great increase over time for the National Guard and reserve. The MoD tried to address this by establishing in 2006 the Reserves Mental Health Programme, which makes Regular military mental health services available to reservists, where the mental health issues are the result of operational experience since 2003. Reservists can also be referred to six community veteran’s mental health therapist pilot schemes by their GPs and have access to the Medical Assessment Programme in London. However, recent research has shown that despite these changes there remain significant differences between the health outcomes of deployed reservists compared to regulars. Dandeker et al argue that this ‘is not simply the result of traumatic experiences during deployment but is affected by the wider context in which deployment and post-deployment events take place’, including:

[R]eservists status, poorer unit cohesion, and perceived leadership. In this connection, there may be issues to do with Reservists’ perceptions of support while on deployment, as well as their deployment with units other than their home unit ... Perceptions of risk may also be different from those of Regulars, and reflect more ‘civilian-like’ attitudes. Finally,
the significance or meaning a mission has for a Reservist, and their potential to apply their own knowledge and skills sets on operations, may affect their post-deployment psychological well-being. Research with US peacekeepers deployed to Bosnia and Croatia found that the meaning that individuals assigned to their work during a stressful event (such as a military operation), was associated with psychological and physical adjustment. Some anecdotal evidence exists that British Reservists achieved very positive outcomes when they applied both their military and civilian skills to assist local (host) populations in Iraq, for example. Development of inventories of Reservists’ civilian skills ... may enhance capability as well as mission ‘meaning’ for Reservists thereby indirectly buffering potential deleterious health effects.

A final factor to consider is the support reservists receive when returning from operations to ease readjustment and reintegration. Some research has shown that families, friendship networks and civilian colleagues may be less supportive and understanding of both the deployment of reservists and their post-deployment experiences and needs. Similarly, the challenges facing families, friends and employers in welcoming reservists back from operation are not well understood. Dandeker et al argue that, ‘taken altogether, work, family and friendship networks may provide less of a buttress’ than they could or should.

Delivering the 2009 Proposition: The Role of the Military Covenant

Giving meaning to, delivering and sustaining the 2009 Proposition will help overcome these issues. However, there has always been a lack of detail underpinning the proposition. In this context, there is an opportunity to capitalise on ongoing work by the coalition government to revive the Military Covenant and place it on a more formal footing.

The place of the reserves within the Military Covenant was commented on recently by the Task Force on the Military Covenant, which recognised the particular demands on reservists that distinguish them from their regular counterparts:

- While deployed, Reservists are treated no differently from their regular military counterparts. However, the needs of Reservists and their families are in some ways unique. While they are deployed, their families are subject to many of the same pressures, but lack the ‘on-base’ support available to Regular Service families. Furthermore, on returning from deployment Reservists quickly revert to their civilian lives, somewhat removed from military support networks and the comradeship they provide. Employers – although aware of their deployment – may struggle to understand the Reservist’s experience and to
appreciate the value of the skills which the Reservist brings back to the work place.

- To date, the Reserve Forces have arguably always been a secondary consideration in the Military Covenant. However, it is the unique needs of reservists and their families which should demand that a higher priority be attached to them within the covenant, not least given that they do not have permanent infrastructure and structures on which to draw upon day-to-day as do regular forces.

- The Task Force made a number of welcome recommendations, the importance of which are confirmed by the experience of other countries and how volunteerism is best encouraged, sustained and managed in other sectors, and the government should take them forward.

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**Box 10: Definition of the Military Covenant**

The Military Covenant rests on three reciprocal relationships, which together [provide the following definition]:

1. **The covenant between the Government and its Armed Forces**: the former expects the latter to carry out their duties in defence of the state to the best of their abilities, up to and including the possibility of death in action. In return the Armed Forces expect that they and their immediate dependants will be cared for and supported both during and after service.

2. **The covenant between the nation and its Armed Forces**: the nation should respect, honour and endorse the sacrifices made by the Armed Forces on its behalf. This must be a two-way relationship, and just as the Armed Forces expect the nation to recognise their ‘right to be different’, so they must respect the values of the society that they represent and defend.

3. **The covenant within the command chain**: for most serving personnel across all three services, their immediate commanders are the pivot of the Military Covenant and are responsible for its delivery. It is therefore the duty of these commanders – including relatively junior leaders – to know its provisions.
Box 11: Recommendations of Military Covenant Task Force in respect of the UK’s Reserve Forces

Public Recognition and Celebration

**Recognised form of ID for Reservists.** Currently some Reservists have no formal means of identifying their status between deployments. Identity cards would allow them to claim any services or discounts offered by private companies under the Community Covenant. A chip-and-pin card could provide a more secure system. Combined with a card reader, such a card could allow remote access to the secure online service personnel system (JPA), which can currently only be accessed during Territorial Army office opening hours via a limited number of terminals. It could also potentially allow access to military bases, subject to commanding officer approval.

**Lord Lieutenants’ Awards** for employers who have supported employees serving as Reservists. This could raise awareness and further incentivise employers to enable their staff to deploy (currently employers are entitled to appeal against mobilisation). It could operate in a similar way to the Chief of Defence Staff’s Commendation.

**Employer Support**

**Support from employers.** Reservists, unlike regulars, can lack the intimate support of their military comrades on return from overseas deployments, making it more difficult to adjust to civilian life. Employers could help by encouraging them to discuss their experiences – for example through informal presentations to colleagues. Employers should also be made aware of the early warning signs that someone may be experiencing problems.

**Encourage professional bodies to recognise relevant deployment experience.** The experience of some Reservists on deployment could enhance their civilian career opportunities but it is too often not properly recognised. Professional bodies, organisations and employers need to be encouraged to develop a process that credits staff who have been deployed. This could also apply to Defence Medical Services (DMS) personnel deployed in NHS Trusts.

**Integrating Regulars and Reserves**

**Encourage retiring Service personnel to join the Reserves.** Encouraging those retiring from Regular Service to become reservists could usefully exploit their operational experience and broaden the range of moral support available to demobilised reservists. Such cross-over could be increased by, for example, including an opportunity to opt-in to Reserve Service at the point of termination. Reservists might particularly benefit from the support of former regular officers with experience of frontline combat.
Nonetheless, questions remain as to whether these recommendations are sufficient; how the recommendations should be related to the government’s intention to publish a new tri-Service Armed Forces Covenant; and how the recommendations should be related to the government’s intention to put into law a requirement to make an annual report to Parliament on how the covenant is being delivered. There are five points to make.

First, the debate surrounding the Military Covenant tends to focus on welfare issues and specific, high profile problems within that area, and this is reflected in the report of the Military Covenant Task Force. These issues are certainly important but do mask broader – perhaps more strategic – issues that are fundamental to a successful covenant and which are paralleled in other sectors, including:

**Welfare Support**

**Information to reservists’ GPs.** As part of the demobilisation medical following deployment, consent should be obtained from Reservists to allow their defence medical records to be transferred to their civilian GP. This communication could then act as the formal handover of medical care from the DMS back to the NHS GP. NHS GPs would therefore be able to respond should Reservists develop physical or psychological problems on their return.

**Better information for GPs on available help for reservists.** In November 2006 the MOD launched the Reserves Mental Health Programme, under which any Reservist deployed after 2003 who has a mental health problem can access the programme by a referral from their GP. This is particularly important, as reservists experience a greater increase in mental health problems than regulars when they return from deployment. Knowledge of the existence of the programme needs to be more widespread: in 2008, 84 per cent of GPs were unaware of its existence. We suggest that information on the programme be included as part of the provision of the DMS medical record to the Reservist’s NHS GP. We also note and support other efforts to raise awareness of all veterans’ health needs among GPs, including the recent publication of ‘Meeting the Healthcare Needs of Veterans – A guide for general practitioners’ by the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) and the RBL, and the future development of a Veterans Healthcare eLearning package by the RCGP on behalf of the Department of Health (England).

**Consider extending Pupil Premium to Reservist Children** (on a case by case basis). Evidence suggests that children of Reservists sometimes experience behavioural problems as a result of their parents’ deployment. If this occurs, schools should be able to address it with additional funding which would need to be applied for on a case by case basis. This would obviously have cost implications which would need to be considered.

Nonetheless, questions remain as to whether these recommendations are sufficient; how the recommendations should be related to the government’s intention to publish a new tri-Service Armed Forces Covenant; and how the recommendations should be related to the government’s intention to put into law a requirement to make an annual report to Parliament on how the covenant is being delivered. There are five points to make.
• Having a clear understanding of the purpose of the Reserve Forces
• Integrating reserve and regular components, including for training and equipment, accepting resulting resourcing implications
• Developing a coherent national recruitment operation
• Creating proper career structures and planning
• Ensuring training is regular and funded properly
• Strengthened and more regular communication with reservists, their families and support structures
• The need for government and the chain of command to provide adequate and timely resourcing across each of the Defence Lines of Development, namely training, equipment, personnel, information, concepts and doctrine, organisation, infrastructure and logistics.

Secondly, it is notable that the government has moved away from its intention, expressed in opposition, to put the Military Covenant on a statutory footing. The task force also implied that this was unnecessary, noting:  

There remains a need for greater engagement and understanding at the local level. Different areas of the UK have different populations and different needs. Some communities have a high concentration of serving personnel while others have a low serving population but may have high numbers of veterans, family members or reservists who will need support of a different kind. Some issues may be specific to particular areas and are therefore difficult to resolve centrally. A ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach can only go so far in addressing these diverse needs. The focus of the Task Force has been to ensure that local areas are able to develop a strategy for providing services appropriate to the Service and veterans communities in their area, with support and guidance from central government.

Instead, the task force placed emphasis on the so-called ‘Armed Forces Community Covenant’, which draws on a US scheme ‘in which states and towns (incorporating local government and local service providers, the voluntary sector and private companies) voluntarily pledge support for the military community in their area. Support could come in a number of forms, depending on the level of central government participation deemed necessary’.  

In a sense the Army is already doing this with its ‘Firm Base’ programme, whereby regional brigades build stronger partnerships with the local area. Reserve Forces and Cadets Associations (RFCAs), which have links to local authorities, are included in parts of this programme.

However, while legislating the covenant across the Defence Lines of Development would certainly be difficult practically and politically, legislation could be useful for ensuring that reservist (and, indeed, regular or veteran) needs are met by the wide range of local statutory bodies involved in the delivery of welfare support. Many of these public sector organisations are
unlikely to have real experience of dealing with the challenges faced by the Reserve Forces (though their experience of veterans has improved).

Thirdly, the proposed annual report to Parliament on how the Military Covenant is being delivered should include a specific section on the Reserve Forces. This section could explore how well the Reserve Forces are being integrated with the regular component across all Defences Lines of Development, as well as welfare issues, levels of employer engagement and support, government communication and public recognition. How the evidence base for this annual report is developed will be crucial; engagement with support networks will be vital for accurate data.

Fourthly, it should not be forgotten that the MoD relies heavily on interventions by third sector (voluntary) bodies to deal with welfare issues arising within the forces. This heavy reliance will continue. The experience these organisations have with veterans is extensive. They should also try to extend their work, in collaboration with the government, to help reservists. The Casework Management System (CMS) which is used by service charities and associations as a tool for dealing with veterans could be extended to cover reservists and their families, as well as in-service/regular welfare issues. The role of the MoD in developing and operating the CMS as a centralised system run on behalf of the third sector and other government departments should also be explored.  

Finally, individuals within the Sponsored Reserve category (and other forms of contractor support) are likely to develop health and well-being issues. As these contracts are very likely to be expanded (see Section VI), the government should explore how to address these challenges in conjunction with industry.

‘Connecting With the Nation’: What Is the Role of the Reserves in Society?

As part of the Military Covenant, the armed forces are expected to respect the values of the society they represent and defend. This raises the reciprocal point about how the military should connect with the nation.

‘Connecting with the nation’ was a task placed on the Reserve Forces by the 2009 Strategic Review of Reserves. This task stemmed from the reduction in size of the regular forces, a consolidation of regular basing arrangements and the high tempo of operations which meant reduced visibility at home (although increased visibility through media coverage of conflicts). The assumption was that the reserves, given their geographical dispersion and the fact they were embedded in local communities and businesses, could fill this gap and maintain public understanding of the military. Politicians have certainly placed importance on this role. The All-Party Parliamentary Reserve Forces Group said in May 2007 that TA integration with the Regular
Army ‘must never be done at the expense of integration with the civilian world’, and the task more than chimes with the coalition government’s ‘Big Society’ agenda.

However, the 2009 Review recognised the difficulty of the Reserve Forces simultaneously connecting with the nation while being operationally effective, in the end valuing ‘well directed and co-ordinated activity above the geographical footprint’. Achieving a balance between the two will continue to be difficult as alternative forms of manpower become integral to achieving operational Defence output and need to be integrated with regular forces, with implications such as co-location. The government will need to decide whether its real priority is ensuring the operational relevance and effectiveness of the reserve component or maintaining a Defence presence in society; the demands of the future character of conflict and challenges following the SDSR suggest that it should be the former, as do the current cost implications of the volunteer estate (see Section VI).

This is not, of course, to suggest that the two tasks are entirely mutually exclusive: societal engagement and understanding of Defence could be maintained through the greater involvement of the armed forces in homeland security and resilience tasks, something which the reserves are well suited to. However, it would also be unfair to assume that the Reserve Forces should fulfil the entire task of ‘connecting with the nation’. Much of the task could be achieved through improved national and local government-level communication of the role of Defence and encouraging communities to recognise, honour and celebrate the armed forces themselves. Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that the issue is not public support for the armed forces themselves, but lack of understanding of current operations, which is a broader political issue.

Summary
Research on the well-being and retention of reservists primarily relates to the land environment. Further, systematic work (both subjective and quantitative) should be undertaken for the air and maritime reserve components.

There are a number of examples of best practice from other sectors for how to encourage and sustain volunteerism. These are easily applicable to the Reserve Forces and include:

- A clear statement of the purpose of voluntary service
- Training opportunities need to be regular and resourced
- Ensuring volunteers are integrated with regular/professional counterparts for training and equipment purposes
- Active career management, including better prospects for advancement, command opportunities at all levels and more formal career planning

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• Strengthened and more regular communication, including with a volunteer’s support structures
• Formal welfare support to volunteers and their families ‘through life’
• The importance of recognising and encouraging celebration of voluntary service at national and local levels
• The need to foster understanding of voluntary service on the part of the public and employers

Many of these examples of best practice were at least alluded to, or implied by, the 2009 Proposition for Reserves. However, there has always been a lack of detail to underpin and drive forward the proposition. There is an opportunity to rectify this as part of ongoing work to put the Military Covenant on a more formal footing, provided this is put into practice by funding appropriate training, integrating the reserves into the force development process and so on.

The Reserve Forces have arguably always been a secondary consideration in the Military Covenant. However, it is the unique needs of reservists and their families which should demand that a higher priority be attached to them within the covenant. If future employment models enable a more fluid and flexible mix and transfer of military, contractor and civilian staff, on demand and through career – including movement of personnel between different categories of service – then Regular Forces will also benefit from this.

The Military Covenant Task Force made a number of important recommendations in relation to the Reserve Forces which should be taken forward.

The debate surrounding the Military Covenant tends to focus on welfare issues. This is important, as despite improvements and MoD trials for new methods of health support, reservists still suffer worse mental health compared to regulars. The reasons for this are not primarily due to traumatic experiences on deployment but a range of wider factors, including poor unit cohesion and lack of support and understanding from family, civilian and employer networks of deployments, and post-deployment needs. Strengthened and more regular communication with reservists, their families, employers and support structures is vital. Similarly, the poor military family welfare support provided to reservists needs to improve.

Legislation could be useful for ensuring that reservist needs are met by the wide range of local statutory bodies involved in the delivery of welfare support. Many of these public sector organisations are unlikely to have real experience of dealing with the challenges faced by the Reserve Forces and their families.
The MoD will continue to rely heavily on interventions by third sector (voluntary) bodies to deal with welfare issues. The experience these organisations have with veterans is extensive. They should also try to extend their work, in collaboration with the government, to help reservists. The Casework Management System (CMS) which is used by service charities and associations as a tool for dealing with veterans could be extended to cover reservists and their families.

Contractor support to operations is likely to increase. Individuals within the Sponsored Reserve category (and other forms of contractor support) are likely to develop health and well-being issues. How the government addresses these in conjunction with industry should be explored.

Evidence shows that welfare and health problems are enhanced by poor status and perceived lack of leadership. This can be addressed by better integrating regular and reserve components. This is as much a cultural change, requiring leadership, as it is about organisational and structural changes.

Welfare and health problems are also enhanced by poor unit cohesion. From an operational perspective, units and sub-units are primarily useful for training and administrative purposes (except where they of a sufficient size to maintain low-end and low readiness capabilities). Integrating regular and reserve components could ease the challenge of unit cohesion by ensuring reservists have contact with operationally experienced individuals.

Evidence further shows that when individuals are able to apply existing civilian skills and knowledge this improves health outcomes. This may enhance capability as well as mission ‘meaning’ for reservists, thereby indirectly buffering potential deleterious health effects. Current efforts to develop mapping and databases of niche skills, as well as a niche skills augmentation cell, are therefore welcome. However, they do not necessarily go far enough. Individuals will increasingly have to be recruited into Reserve Forces because of their existing skills and knowledge, and mobilised for this purpose. Closely related to this is the importance of articulating a clear requirement of the roles and skills required both for the recruitment of individuals into a reserve and for their deployment on operations (a lesson from the Civilian Stabilisation Group).

This in turn relates to a broader issue. Although the debate surrounding the Military Covenant tends to focus on important welfare issues, the covenant also covers broader strategic issues, including:

- Having a clear understanding of the purpose of the Reserve Forces
- Integrating reserve and regular components, including for training and equipment, accepting resulting resourcing implications
• Developing a coherent national recruitment operation
• Creating proper career structures and planning
• Ensuring training is regular and funded properly
• Strengthened and more regular communication with reservists, their families and support structures
• The need for the government and the chain of command to provide adequate and timely resourcing across each of the Defence Lines of Development, namely training, equipment, personnel, information, concepts and doctrine, organisation, infrastructure and logistics.

All this reinforces the need for the reserve component to be integrated into Defence force development and planning as a core rather than secondary consideration, and for associated changes to funding and other support levels to be made.

The proposed annual report to Parliament on how the Military Covenant is being delivered should include a specific section on the Reserve Forces. This should explore how well the Reserve Forces are being integrated with the regular component across all Defences Lines of Development, as well as welfare issues, levels of employer engagement and support, government communication and public recognition. How the evidence base for this annual report is developed will be crucial; engagement with individuals and their families is vital for accurate data.

Contractor support to operations will increase. These contractors are likely to develop health and well-being issues. The government needs to explore how to manage this in conjunction with industry.

Achieving a balance between an operationally effective reserve component and one which ‘connects with the nation’ will be difficult, particularly as reserves will have to integrate with regular forces in the future. The government will need to decide whether its real priority is ensuring the operational relevance and effectiveness of the reserve component or maintaining a Defence presence in society; the demands of the future character of conflict and challenges following the SDSR suggest that it should be the former. The government can do more to connect Defence with society itself by improving communication about, and public recognition of, the armed forces and the role of Defence. Indeed, this would arguably be more valuable as evidence suggests that the issue is not public support for the armed forces themselves but lack of understanding of current operations.

If the armed forces assume a greater role in homeland security and resilience this will help maintain a public understanding of Defence. The government must be clear about the future role of the armed forces in the homeland and, within this, the place of the reserves.
The Ministry of Defence should take this into account when taking forward its work on NEM.

Unfortunately, it cannot be assumed that even if these steps are taken there will be a large enough increase in the size of the Volunteer Reserve, through better recruitment and retention, to meet all possible capability demands (especially specialist), so the value of private sector contractor support will remain important. The potential industrial involvement in future force structures is explored in the next section.

**Notes and References**


2. Dennis J Reimer, Roger C Schultz, James R Helmy, *The Independent Panel Review of Reserve Component Employment in an Era of Persistent Conflict*, 2 November 2010, p. 12. There are some parallels here with the MoD’s use of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 which was designed to make the Reserve Forces more usable. The MoD has always tried to ensure that only reservists who have expressed a willingness to serve are mobilised (so-called ‘intelligent mobilisation’ which allows reservists to opt-in), except when planning assumptions are exceeded by far. The premise for intelligent mobilisation is that it is difficult to rely on compulsion even though individuals decided to enter into a contract of liability when joining the Reserve Forces. The process arguably falls short of what was envisaged, operationally, from RFA 1996. See Christopher Dandeker, Neil Greenberg and Geoffrey Orme, ‘The UK’s Reserve Forces: Retrospect and Prospect’, *Armed Forces and Society* (February 2011), p. 8.


7. From Headquarters Army Training and Recruiting.


23. It is sometimes argued that reserve units and sub-units are important for this purpose— that ‘the less likely such units have a role in operations the less opportunities there are for Reserve officers to exercise command and thus achieve job satisfaction through
dealing with the challenges of such roles’; see Dandeker et al, *op cit.*, p. 18. This is not necessarily true, particularly if regular and reserve components are better integrated. Canada’s experience is useful in this respect.
V. Employers and Industry

In previous sections of this report, the importance of balancing the demands of civilian employment and reserve service, and being able to exploit the ability of industry to provide (or contribute to) alternative forms of manpower, have been alluded to. In light of this, RUSI undertook a survey of 200 corporate members of the Institute, Federation of Small Businesses and Northern Defence Industries in February and March 2011 to:

- Understand whether, and how, a wide range of companies engage with the Ministry of Defence and armed forces
- The appetite in the private sector for exploring new and innovative employment models and partnerships in the future.

Respondents came from the manufacturing, public service, construction, financial, public administration and retail sectors. Thirty-six per cent of respondents classified themselves as SMEs, and 90 per cent as members of the defence and security industry.

Engagement with employers and industry is vital to achieving full manning and capability requirements. Employers have to support the mobilisation of any employees who are reservists, and increasingly industry provides contracted support through a number of employment models including Sponsored Reserves. In the future, the requirement for good engagement with employers and industry will become more important as two developments start to take effect: first, manning models that enable a more fluid and flexible mix of military, contractor and civilian staff, on demand and through career. Employers will have to manage this; secondly, a ‘Total Support Force’ where industry and reserves are integrated into regular structures against readiness assumptions and agile force generation requirements. Industry needs to support this.

Defence Engagement with Employers and Industry

The majority of respondents to the RUSI survey (over 50 per cent) drove engagement with the Ministry of Defence and armed forces themselves, rather than vice versa. Once engagement had started, it was regular (at least monthly, usually weekly) and mainly at middle management rather than just senior levels. This engagement took place in relation to certain key areas, namely acquisition, contractor support to operations, the provision of technical support and, secondary to all of this, the mobilisation of reservists.

This engagement, however, does not necessarily translate into an understanding of Defence, and the lack of proactive engagement on the part of MoD and the armed forces is problematic in two respects as the government attempts to move towards a ‘Whole Force’ approach.
First, many respondents (73 per cent) who had experience of employing reservists and their mobilisation did not know about the SaBRE campaign, which was established in 2002 to enhance the employer/Reservist relationship and support employers of reservists. Of the small number of respondents who were aware of the campaign (23 per cent), two-thirds of these found it ‘helpful’ (but not ‘very helpful’) and a third found it ‘neither helpful or unhelpful’. The reach of SaBRE is more limited in relation to SMEs and those companies that have no experience of reservists. Although this would not in itself stop the respondents from encouraging their employees to become reservists, if the armed forces rely to a greater extent on reservist manpower in the future then Defence must become more proactive and strengthen its engagement with, and support to, a wider range of employers.

Secondly, the development of ‘fluid’ manning models and the Total Support Force concept both rely on the support of industry for their successful development and implementation. However:

- Support for exploring ‘fluid’ manning models stood at just over 50 per cent of all respondents. Forty-five per cent of respondents said they ‘did not know’ whether they would consider this approach.
- Support for integrating companies into defence planning and readiness assumptions stood at just over 50 per cent. Nine per cent of respondents said they would not do this and 36 per cent were unsure. Better engagement with industry on the vision for Defence Support would help drive progress. This is particularly important because the Defence Support Review envisages greater planned use of contractors on operations (with the armed forces structured accordingly) ‘in functions that are commensurate with the category of threat level in order to accommodate force protection and duty of care responsibilities, normally with increasingly higher proportion of contractors on successive roulements for enduring operations’.

**The Prospects for Partnerships with Industry**

Within the private sector:

- There is a clear willingness on the part of many companies to share the training of staff with the armed forces in the future. Seventy-three per cent of respondents thought this was a good idea, and only 27 per cent were unsure. Indeed, in the air domain there are already some instances of civilian Sponsored Reserves learning military skills while RAF personnel who are seconded to the SR company in turn complete their civilian licences.
- Companies were less sure about jointly recruiting staff with the armed forces in the future; those that said ‘no’ did so because of their size or
because of their reliance on recruiting ex-military personnel for their skills base
- Fifty-five per cent of companies were willing to explore the possibility of developing joint employment contracts or career planning with the armed forces in the future, though 36 per cent were unsure.

What seems to underpin the willingness to explore joint training and career planning is the fact that there is overlap between the technical and/or professional skills that companies develop in their staff and those skills that the armed forces develop in their personnel. It should be noted that respondents did not perceive themselves to be in competition with the armed forces in recruiting quality staff. In other words, there is mutual benefit for the private sector and Defence to work together. The UK could draw on the proven US Army Reserve ‘Employer Partnership’ model. Under this scheme, the Army Reserve partners with corporations, industry associations, state agencies and local police departments. The Reserve has signed 1,190 Employer Partnership Agreements with the medical community (for doctors and nurses), the truckers association (for drivers), companies such as McAfee

**Box 11: Examples of the Success of the US Army Reserve ‘Employer Partnership’**

1. **Mutually Beneficial Skills**
   A major trucking company, one of USAR’s civilian partners, uses a state of the art training center complete with truck simulator cabs. Army Reserve drivers, who are employees of this trucking company, use the simulator to confront an array of driving hazards. The drivers train and work daily to operate a truck safely on the road. When these soldiers get in the cab of military trucks, they are better, more experienced drivers because of the training received from their civilian partner. America gets a better, more disciplined, service-oriented employee, a more skilled and capable truck driver, and a stronger soldier. That is a positive return on investment.

2. **Providing employers with access to quality personnel**
   In one example, AMTRAK (US railways) attended a US Army Recruiting Command event at Ft Lewis, WA. Employer Partnership Program Support Manager John Patterson met the AMTRAK HR Manager during this meeting. AMTRAK requested candidates for a ‘Standards’ job in Seattle, WA. Mr. Patterson informed 1Lt Matt Mitchell, a USAR soldier who graduated from Wake Forest University, and earned a Master’s degree from Tulane. Mitchell was hired on 15 September 2010 with a 1 October start date. AMTRAK recruiters are so pleased with initial results in finding 1Lt Mitchell that they now request resumés for further positions they have available.
(for cyber security specialists) and defence companies such as Boeing (for engineers). The intention is to reduce competition for recruitment and also use complementary skills developed in civilian and military life to mutually benefit both the employer and Defence. For example, common or joint curricula can be developed with a company and the training (and associated costs) shared. The challenge here is to work with the companies to align employer and military training cycles.

**Integrating Industry into Force Generation Requirements**

However, the question of how this willingness for partnering with Defence to recruit and train people translates into the provision of alternative forms of manpower as part of an integrated force generation process is a different issue.

Clearly the use of Sponsored Reserves for service support has been successful to date and companies are keen that the financial return they get in any future provision of support services or other capabilities to Defence is similar to that of the Sponsored Reserve arrangement. Sponsored Reserves are employees of a company that has a contract with the MoD for the provision of support services. They have special liabilities for reserve service, training and call-out so that they can be called on to support the MoD on operations as servicemen or women utilising the skills their employers have been contracted to provide. The contractor will be responsible for employing sufficient numbers of employees who have become Sponsored Reserves to meet the MoD’s requirements. Terms and conditions of service are based on those for conventional Volunteer Reservists but they have been modified to take account of the special liabilities. They are effectively available operationally in the same way as their Regular counterparts so can provide support at home or on deployed operations – they can be mobilised and demobilised very quickly.¹

Sponsored Reserves are, of course, just one component of Contractor Support to Operations (CSO) which also provides for Contractors on Deployed Operations (CONDOs – that is, service providers and original equipment manufacturers) and Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs). The use of CSO is already somewhat extensive, with up to 7,000 contractors deployed on Operations Telic, Herrick, Calash and Oculus.² Figure 4 identifies the split between CONDOs, Sponsored Reserves and PMSCs and the extent of the MoD’s dependency on the support provided by each category.
It is notable that contractors are ‘already ‘replacing’ rather than ‘augmenting’ military capability, especially in support of Urgent Operational Requirements (UORs) and in the sustainment phase of operations.’ This trend will only increase as core military capacities are eroded as a result of SDSR; it is no longer the case that contractors will only supply support services when the military cannot provide a capability within proscribed readiness and warning times.

However, to date the use of CSO has been reactive, which means that industry has not been integrated properly into a deployed force (including during pre-deployment training). This is a significant weakness and barrier to the Total Support Force concept and needs to be overcome. Central to this is defining (or, after the SDSR, re-defining) what a core military capability is and what a support capability is.

The question of where the boundary lies between governmental and core military roles on the one hand and the potential contributions of industry on the other has not been answered satisfactorily to date. A workshop with industry during the SDSR suggested that inherently government roles probably included:
• Policy
• Requirements setting
• Direct participation in hostilities
• Intimate integration with a lethal system (such as target acquisition)
• Command and control decision-making
• Operations in high risk areas
• Special forces
• Niche expertise and specialist knowledge.

This would imply that industry is unwilling to move beyond the provision of support services to what are intuitively considered governmental roles. However, RUSI’s survey indicates that 64 per cent of respondents see value in extending the integrated military-industrial model along the lines of that currently used for medical support to include all support activity close to the front line and ‘in-depth’ support in the field in areas such as cyber security, combat engineering and communications (only 36 per cent did not know if this should happen).

Certainly there is benefit in using contractors to perform non-combat activities, as this frees up uniformed personnel to perform combat missions. It should continue. However, in reality a clear delineation is difficult to establish and ongoing experience in Iraq and Afghanistan also demonstrates the use of contractors in a number of areas that would traditionally be considered inherently governmental, including training local security forces, conducting interrogations and maintaining weapons (a practice particularly adopted by the US Department of Defense). Operational experience has also seen contractors build (or rebuild) physical, political, social and economic infrastructure, during and after hostilities. In an FCOC environment the value of this capacity-building and infrastructure expertise, as well as specialist skills in areas like cyber and linguistics, should not be underestimated and most environments will be ‘contested, congested, cluttered’ – in other words, high risk. Furthermore, industry would arguably find it easier to maintain complex, high-end capabilities at a unit or sub-unit level than the Volunteer Reserve and any contracted support, when not deployed, could also be used in a homeland context.

It is vital that the government creatively defines in advance those areas it will not contract out and those it will seek to avoid contracting out as a matter of policy. However, it should leave open the possibility of employing contractors in the latter positions during times of crisis and jointly develop core competencies with industry so that it can provide that support when needed. The issues then are two-fold.

First, what risk environment companies would be willing to deploy to as contractors or, indeed, whether the company would allow their employees
to transition from CSO status to another category of the reserve which has more flexible terms and conditions of service for higher threat areas. The potential to exploit the willingness of companies to develop joint employment contracts or career planning could assist the latter.

Secondly, what level of risk the armed forces are willing to take by outsourcing the provision of capabilities or services which they rely on (including whole platforms) as part of, for example, the Multi-Role Brigade construct. This should not be a significant issue as contracts already include readiness requirements and contractors have demonstrated their ability to provide assured access. The real requirement is to integrate contractors into deployed forces properly, including at all stages of training.

Summary

- Effective engagement with employers and industry will be vital to achieving full manning and capability requirements
- Employers have to support the mobilisation of any employees who are reservists. This will become more vital as the MoD seeks to develop manning models that enable a more fluid and flexible mix of military, contractor and civilian staff, on demand and through career. Employers will have to manage this fluidity
- If the armed forces rely to a greater extent on reservist manpower in the future then Defence must become more proactive and strengthen its engagement with, and support of, a wider range of employers. The need for a Defence strategy to drive employer support and a strengthened SaBRE campaign are both vital
- Defence should exploit the willingness of companies to share the training of staff and to develop joint employment contracts or career plans. The MoD should draw on the proven US Army Reserve ‘Employer Partnership’ model to enable this. This will make employers and industry more likely to allow reservists to use civilian skills for Defence outputs. It could also help avoid a situation which exists at present in relation to Full Time Reserve Service and Additional Duties Commitment, where an employer has no legal obligation to reinstate an employee who chooses to take up these positions. Any joint contracts or career plans should include readiness requirements
- The MoD needs to undertake more engagement with industry to drive forward its vision for Defence support
- Industry (and the Volunteer Reserve) will no longer simply augment the regular force
- Contractor support is largely limited to the support area at the moment and MoD thinking about what capability areas to extend contractor support to is immature. Greater work is needed to determine those areas in which the government and companies
are willing to allow the extension of contractor support – not just at home but on deployed operations. Contractor support needs to be looked at to meet the requirements of an FCOC environment, such as specialist knowledge and skills. The potential for industry to be able to sustain high-end, complex capabilities that the Volunteer Reserve cannot is also significant and deserves to be explored (not least for the purposes of reconstitution). Any contracted support, when not deployed, could also be used in a homeland context.

- The MoD and industry should develop flexible contracts that allow contractors to accept higher levels of risk, perhaps by moving on to different terms and conditions at different stages of operations.
- If the MoD is to rely on greater contractor support, it is right that industry should be integrated into defence planning and readiness assumptions. However, industry attitudes are ambivalent about this at present. Better engagement is needed.
- As part of integrating industry into readiness assumptions, there is a real requirement to integrate contractors into all stages of military training.
- Individuals within the Sponsored Reserve category (and other forms of contractor support) are likely to develop health and well-being issues. The place of contractors in the Military Covenant should be explored.

The Ministry of Defence should take this into account when taking forward its work on NEM.

A final consideration, of course, is whether these alternative forms of manpower provision offer better value for money compared to regular forces. This is explored in the next section.

Notes and References

1. Since the inception of Sponsored Reserves in 2000, nine contracts have been enabled, employing approximately 1,600 people.


4. Ibid.

6. Some have indicated an appetite for this provided performance in higher threat areas is rewarded sufficiently. Moreover, it is also clear that government needs to share operational threat assessments with contractors. See Andrew Higginson, *op. cit.*
VI. The Value for Money of Different Forms of Manpower

Achieving value for money is understandably at the top of the coalition government’s agenda, and the expectation will undoubtedly be that the future use of Reserve Forces and other manpower should contribute to this aim.

It is intuitive that the costs of the Reserve Forces are less than those of the regular component. This has encouraged some to suggest that capabilities could be transferred from regular to reserve units cheaply and effectively. The Defence Select Committee, for example, noted in its report on the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) that:

The relative costs of maintaining current capabilities within the Reserve Forces rather than the Regular Forces needs to be identified by the NSC [National Security Council]. Cost equivalency has not been adequately measured in the past but there has to be a case for considering that the UK could in some way move closer to the US or Canadian model, where a greater proportion of capabilities and manpower sits within the Reserve Forces. We are disappointed that there has been no specific work-stream within the MoD on developing the role of the Reserve Forces, especially considering the radical intent behind the SDSR. We were assured that some of the MoD studies cover the use of Reservists, but it seems odd that there has been no discrete study dedicated to exploring this issue. We requested information concerning the relative costs of reservist and regular units—for example a Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) regiment—but the MoD failed to provide comparative costings. This is unsatisfactory, and reveals MoD’s failure to address seriously the option of placing capabilities into the Reserve Forces at much lower cost, as the Americans have done. We recommend that the increased use of Reservists should be properly covered by the NSC in its discussions.

The Defence Committee is right to note that cost equivalency has not been adequately measured in the past; a National Audit Office (NAO) report in 2006 criticised the MoD for this, saying it was ‘difficult to quantify the extent of the cost-effectiveness of Reserve Forces as the department has limited management information on their costs and capabilities’. The NAO recommended that the MoD ‘make decisions on the current and future use and structure of Reserve Forces in the light of a full range of information about Reservists, their training, their cost and the capability they deliver’. This recommendation was important as it pointed to the need to assess value for money not just by comparing direct costs per individual in the regular and reserve components, but by identifying elements of that cost
(such as training) and undertaking a more sophisticated assessment of their respective contributions to defence and security tasks. The latter provided the context that was missing from the Defence Committee’s more recent conclusions; it is notable that the NAO argued:\footnote{4}:

> It is difficult to sustain operations numerically without the Reserves and there are specialist skills which are more cost effectively met by Reservists because they are needed infrequently. Equally, Reserve forces could not substitute for the capability provided by large parts of the Regular Armed Forces, given the inherent limitations in training time and that they are not able to deploy as quickly as high readiness forces. Decisions on the balance between Regulars and Reserves are made, therefore, in large part on the basis of the military requirement.

The assumptions underpinning this have, of course, changed. Most notably, specialist skills will be needed frequently.

The MoD subsequently undertook a Cost of Reserves Study which reported in September 2007.\footnote{5} This study was partially updated by the 2009 Strategic Review of Reserves. This report does not have access to the data necessary for making direct comparative costs of regulars versus reserves. The MoD still does not appear to have a systemic approach to collecting and assessing data in relation to the reserve component. This needs to be corrected. Nonetheless, it is worth reviewing the findings of the National Audit Office and MoD’s 2007 and 2009 exercises to distil a framework that can be used to make value for money judgements. Where possible, data is benchmarked against international figures to reinforce or challenge previous conclusions. Moreover, the likelihood of the armed forces having to rely on contractor support to a greater extent in the future means that an assessment should also be made of the relative value for money that options like Sponsored Reserves provide; previous MoD and NAO studies only looked at the Volunteer Reserve.

**Value For Money Framework**

The 2009 Strategic Review of Reserves noted that ‘as the average cost of a reserve is a fraction of the cost of a regular, increasing funds to the reserve is a more cost effective way of improving overall defence capability, with the proviso that this capability is suited to a reserve role’\footnote{6}.

The starting point for any value for money (VFM) framework must be the tasks which the armed forces are expected to perform and deliver (see Section II). While reserves have been employed extensively on recent (ongoing) operations, this has largely been reactive: Defence Planning Assumptions (DPAs) and force structure guidelines have always assumed that regular forces will be reinforced by other sources of manpower, usually when the
DPAs are exceeded – not that alternative forms of manpower could become integral to achieving Defence outputs. They also have not reflected the likely type, scale, range, frequency and concurrency of future military activities. Within the 2020 timeframe, it is likely that specialist skills will be required more frequently, on small and medium scales.

To assess the value for money of different forms of manpower in meeting this requirement, the MoD must identify the following:

1. The skills required for these tasks, in addition to core or general military capabilities
2. The costs of recruiting regular and reserve components
3. The cost of general training for regular and reserve personnel
4. The costs and timelines for training regular personnel to the level of specialism and readiness required for military tasks (individual and collective training)
5. The cost and timelines for training general volunteer reserves to the level of specialism and readiness required for military tasks (individual and collective training)
6. The cost of exercises for regular and reserve personnel
7. The cost and timeline for training specialist civilians (recruited into the volunteer reserve because of their expertise)
8. The cost and timelines of contracted support, on an individual rather than contractual basis, including for training and exercising with regular components
9. The costs of ‘sustaining’ personnel, in terms of pay, allowances, benefits, pension and so on, at home and on operation
10. The cost of the infrastructure for different force elements
11. Welfare support to personnel and families and also, in the case of reservists, support to employers
12. The cost of any welfare support to contractors.

Cost should be calculated per annum and, as implied in the list, across each of the Defence Lines of Development.

Relative VFM Assessment and Implications for the Use and Structure of Reserve Forces

Tables 5 and 6 use aggregate data from the following sources:

- 2006 NAO report on Reserve Forces
- 2007 Management Consultancy Services (Army) Cost of Reserves Study
- 2009 Strategic Review of Reserves
- 2010 Aggregate CSO costs.
These are used in order to give indicative value for money estimates of the direct costs of different forms of manpower (excluding cadet-related expenditure). These estimates are made across the Defence Lines of Development, at home and on operation. The tables assume that maximum costs lie with the Regular Forces. Where a row or column is highlighted ‘green’ this represents good relative value for money from an alternative form of manpower.

Tables 7 and 8 identify the relative readiness levels of different sources of manpower (where readiness is a function of training, exercising, existing skills/knowledge and mobilisation/deployment timelines), as readiness should be a key determinant of the value for money that manpower makes to military tasks. In this case ‘green’ indicates a good ability to meet the readiness requirement of a particular task and ‘red’ a poor ability. Previous studies have not looked at operational deployment costs or readiness levels; these are vital to value for money assessments.

In all tables, ‘specialist unit’ refers to those units, principally in the Territorial Army (where there are thirteen), which are recruited nationally and draw upon specific civilian skills or previous armed forces experience.

Apart from contractor support options, the tables above do mask differences between each of the services. However, in overall terms they suggest that:

- Training costs for individuals with existing specialist skills will be lower than those for non-specialists in the Volunteer Reserve
- Specialist individuals and units have reduced standing costs compared to regular members of the Volunteer Reserve
- Specialist individuals are likely to have higher readiness levels than non-specialists in the Volunteer Reserve
- General Volunteer Reserves will be best suited to low readiness or enduring tasks
- Specialist individuals or units and contractor support could be used to reconstitute capabilities
- Costs on deployment will be comparable for regular and reserve components. Contractor support options will be cheaper, though their terms and conditions of service are more limited at present. This could – and arguably should – change.

The implications of this for the use of the Reserve Forces are various:

1. Overall, the reserves are better able to provide particular specialist skills compared to general duty manpower or ‘platforms’. Individual reservists are able to contribute unique and specialist skills that, when integrated with regular units and other departments and agencies, or combined to form a specialist team or unit, can meet the bespoke
### Table 5: Indicative Relative Value for Money of Standing Costs by Manpower

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contractor Support</th>
<th>Military</th>
<th>Administrative Support – Civilian</th>
<th>HQ Enabling Costs</th>
<th>Estate/Infrastructure</th>
<th>Unit Collective Training (General)</th>
<th>Individual Training (General)</th>
<th>Recruitment</th>
<th>Recruitment</th>
<th>Training – Civilian</th>
<th>Training – Military</th>
<th>Administering ord</th>
<th>Through-life support, e.g. pay, pensions, allowances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6: Indicative Aggregate Costs on Deployed Operations by Manpower

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contractor Support</th>
<th>Military</th>
<th>Administrative Support – Civilian</th>
<th>HQ Enabling Costs</th>
<th>Estate/Infrastructure</th>
<th>Unit Collective Training (General)</th>
<th>Individual Training (General)</th>
<th>Recruitment</th>
<th>Recruitment</th>
<th>Training – Civilian</th>
<th>Training – Military</th>
<th>Administering ord</th>
<th>Through-life support, e.g. pay, pensions, allowances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 7: Indicative Readiness Levels of Different Forms of Manpower.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Readiness Levels</th>
<th>Regular Force units/individuals</th>
<th>Volunteer Reserve units/Individuals</th>
<th>Readiness by Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High (short notice)</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Homeland security and resilience (high readiness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low (enduring/standing task)</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Defence of Overseas Territories (low readiness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extended (reconstitution)</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Military Power Projection (low readiness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Readiness (low readiness)</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Conflict Prevention (low readiness)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 8: Indicative Readiness Levels of Different Forms of Manpower by Task.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Readiness Levels</th>
<th>Readiness by Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Homeland security and resilience (high readiness)</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Military Power Projection (low readiness)</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conflict Prevention (low readiness)</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Defence of Overseas Territories (low readiness)</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Military Power Projection (high readiness)</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Homeland security and resilience (high readiness)</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Function of Training/Skills Development**

**Timelines and Costs**
requirements of future operations. Individuals should increasingly be recruited for particular skills and be prepared to mobilise outside home units

2. It will be easier for individuals rather than reserve units or sub-units to deploy quickly in response to urgent expeditionary requirements. The government should explore how to encourage more specialists (and their employers) to volunteer for high readiness

3. It will be difficult for reserve units to maintain full-spectrum capabilities where the complexity of modern systems is high and, as a result, the levels of training and use required to maintain proficiency are substantial. Reserve units and sub-units could, however, maintain capabilities in less technically complex areas such as combat support and combat service support more easily. They could also perform ongoing or enduring tasks

4. Industry could help meet the requirement to maintain high technology capabilities at appropriate readiness and cost.

In other words, the reserves should build capability packages that can be sustained at higher levels of readiness in an inactive duty status and deployed with a minimum of pre-deployment training. There could also be greater reliance on industry to provide capabilities and a basis for reconstituting technologically complex capabilities.

**International Comparisons and Improving VFM**

Clearly value for money is a function of the balance between two factors: direct cost comparisons and readiness/operational effectiveness. A key question is whether costs within the Reserve Force can be reduced further (in their own terms) while still maintaining operational effectiveness and, in particular, good readiness levels.

The assessments above do not take into account the likely impact of potential changes to the Volunteer Reserve such as greater integration with regular component chains of command, units and training, rationalisation of the estate through co-location and so on. The 2009 Strategic Review of Reserves found that the real cost drivers for the reserve component, particularly the Territorial Army, were estate and unit support costs (the latter made up of the full-time regular manpower supporting of reservists).

**International Comparisons**

This is mirrored by international comparators.

The US Army Reserve Component’s budget for the financial year 2012 is made up of (excluding overseas contingency funding):
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Army National Guard ($m)</th>
<th>Army Reserve ($m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Military Personnel</strong></td>
<td>7,623</td>
<td>4,386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(of which 3,441 is spent on full-time Active Guard/Reserve support particularly for training)</td>
<td>(of which 1,832 is spent on full-time Active Guard/Reserve support particularly for training)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operation and Maintenance</strong></td>
<td>7,041</td>
<td>3,109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(of which 6,419 is used to fund operational activities and 622 on administration and support services)</td>
<td>(of which 2,952 is used to fund operational activities and 157 on administration and support services)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Military Construction (new construction projects)</strong></td>
<td>774</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The spend on full-time regular support is significant, as is the spend on infrastructure to support operational activities.

The US Air Force Reserve Component has a total budget of $5,019 million for the financial year 2012 (excluding overseas contingency funding). This budget is shown in Table 10.
Table 10: Breakdown of US Air Reserve Component budget FY2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Army National Guard ($m)</th>
<th>Air Reserve ($m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Military Personnel</strong></td>
<td>1,969</td>
<td>3,496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(of which 43% is spent on unit and individual training and 45% is spent on other training and regular support)</td>
<td>(of which 31% is spent on unit and individual training and 58% on payroll and other training)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operation and Maintenance</strong></td>
<td>3,274</td>
<td>6,136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(of which 16% is spent on property maintenance and 12% on base support, administration; the bulk is spent on primary combat force capabilities)</td>
<td>(of which 17% is spent on property maintenance and 10% on base support, administration; the bulk is spent on primary combat force capabilities)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Military Construction (new construction projects)</strong></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The spend on full-time regular support is significant.

The US Maritime Reserve budget for financial year 2012 is made up of (excluding overseas contingency funding):

Table 11: Breakdown of US Maritime Reserve budget FY2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Navy Reserve ($m)</th>
<th>Marine Reserve ($m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Military Personnel</strong></td>
<td>1,961</td>
<td>653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operation and Maintenance</strong></td>
<td>1,323</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Military Construction (new construction projects)</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All US services are subject to the Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC) of 2005 which aims to close excess military installations, realign total asset inventories to reduce expenditures on operations and maintenance, better integrate active and reserve units and improve co-operation between military service branches while training and fighting. The US is therefore acutely aware of these cost overheads.

The Canadian Primary Reserve budget between 2009 and 2011 is detailed below:

**Table 12: Breakdown of Canadian Primary Reserve budget 2009/10 and 2010/11 (CA$ 000s).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009/10</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reserve Pay</td>
<td>686,289</td>
<td>645,629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Support Staff</td>
<td>150,194</td>
<td>155,432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve Operating</td>
<td>84,378</td>
<td>70,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ammunition</td>
<td>14,947</td>
<td>14,955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment Usage</td>
<td>57,591</td>
<td>58,793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>20,383</td>
<td>20,638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Operating</td>
<td>40,503</td>
<td>41,636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base Support</td>
<td>228,251</td>
<td>233,843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>5,545</td>
<td>5,655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated Capital</td>
<td>12,158</td>
<td>23,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Capital</td>
<td>36,520</td>
<td>84,915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cost</strong></td>
<td>1,324,600</td>
<td>1,331,745</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from pay, the notable costs are those for regular support staff and base support.

In Australia, as reserves are integrated with Permanent Force capabilities, reserve funding is not separated from other funds.
**Improving VFM**

It is clear that if the relative costs of the Reserve Forces are to be reduced, the two areas to focus on are estates and regular support. Integrating the regular and reserve components can help to rationalise the volunteer estate and therefore reduce associated infrastructure costs through co-location, as the Royal Naval Reserve and Royal Auxiliary Air Force have shown by utilising regular facilities. But for all services, particularly the Territorial Army, there is a tension here between aggregating roles in centres to reduce costs and providing a choice of roles and footprint across the country.

Moreover, consolidating the estate by co-locating units will not in itself reduce the significant regular support costs. These costs are driven by training requirements: training is unit and role specific, and therefore requires dedicated regular training staff whatever the footprint of a reserve component across the country. The costs will be reduced only if the armed forces:

- Integrate individual reservists with regular unit training (regular units will need to accept the risk associated with having a reservist form an element of their capability or function)
- Recruit individuals with specialist skills
- Develop links with local voluntary organisations and academic institutions to sustain and develop skills of low technological complexity
- Explore the possibility of joint training with industry where there is overlap in the skills required by both organisations (this is in line with Total Support Force thinking – see Section V)
- Explore the greater use of contracted support for training purposes (for both regular and reserve components). This is in line with the Total Support Force ambition (see Section V).

Overall, however, there first needs to be much greater clarity about the role of the reserve forces. This will in turn drive more focused and targeted training regimes.

**Summary**

The starting point for any value for money framework must be the tasks which the armed forces are expected to perform and deliver.

Clearly, value for money is a function of the balance between two factors: direct cost comparisons and readiness/operational effectiveness.

Costs for different manpower types must be calculated across each of the Defence Lines of Development, including health and welfare support to personnel and families.
Previous studies have not looked at operational deployment costs or readiness levels. These are vital to value for money assessments.

Against these criteria, it is clear that:

- Contractor support will be the cheapest option across the Defence Lines of Development (DLoDs) and provide highest readiness levels. Contracts can and should include value for money considerations
- Individuals with existing specialist skills will be cheaper and provide higher levels of readiness and should be the focus of recruitment activity. The government should explore how to encourage more specialists to volunteer for the reserves and, within that, high readiness
- General reservists will be best suited to low readiness, low technology, enduring tasks
- Industry could help maintain full-spectrum capabilities more effectively than reserve units
- Costs on deployment will be comparable for regular and reserve components; deployed contractor support options will be cheaper, though their terms and conditions of service are more limited at present – this should change.

A key question that still remains is whether costs within the Reserve Force could be reduced further while maintaining (and ideally improving) operational effectiveness and, in particular, readiness.

If the MoD is successful in developing employment models that enable a more fluid and flexible mix and transfer of military, contractor and civilian staff, on demand and through career – and between different categories of service – then it should be able to balance different personnel cost factors at any given time to achieve better value for money.

The cost drivers for the reserve component, particularly the Territorial Army, remain estate and unit support costs. This is confirmed by international benchmarks.

Integrating the regular and reserve components could help to rationalise the volunteer estate and therefore reduce associated infrastructure costs through co-location.

Co-locating units will not in itself reduce the significant regular support costs for reservists. These costs are driven by training requirements. There needs to be much greater clarity about the role of the reserve forces to drive more focused and targeted training regimes. Innovative ways to reduce these costs would then be to:
• Integrate reservists with regular unit training
• Recruit individuals with specialist skills
• For skills of low technological complexity, develop links with local voluntary organisations and academic institutions
• Explore the possibility of jointly sharing training costs with the private sector
• Explore greater use of contracted support for training purposes (for both regular and reserve components).

Notes and References

3. Ibid., para. 17.
4. Ibid., para. 9.
7. Submission to SDSR Support Strand team by Andrew Higginson, 1 July 2010.
8. The health and welfare costs for reservists and their families need to be calculated by the MoD. They are probably underestimated.
9. For example, the Military Covenant Task Force rightly recommended that the armed forces building on links between RFCAs and youth organisations noting that ‘as a result of their responsibility for the Cadets, the RFCAs are involved with other youth groups through Youth United. The Adjutant General has engaged the Army with the Prince’s Trust. There is further scope for collaboration, including sharing facilities; this should be fully exploited’. This approach should be adopted by the other Services. It should also be extended to cover a wide range of voluntary (not just youth) organisations, such as the RNLI and MCA.
VII. Conclusion

There is a growing view that a significant and well-thought-through role for the UK’s Reserve Forces will be one of the benchmarks for measuring the success of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR). This is often because commentators believe the reserves can be used to solve deficiencies arising from the capability cuts imposed by the SDSR; they assume that the relative size of the Reserve Forces (and particularly the Territorial Army) can be increased and their structure reconfigured to approximate that of organisations like the US National Guard. Graeme Lamb and Richard Williams, for example, argue in an extensive report that:

In spite of a long history of maintaining territorial / reserve forces as a way of being able to rapidly increase the amount of trained defence manpower at a time of national crisis, and their utility being proven, beyond question, in the battles of Iraq and Afghanistan, there is still a tendency within the MoD to cut / limit their numbers or starve them of resources as a way of funding investment in the standing forces. In our view, this runs against the flow of the natural evolution of our forces in the modern era. In particular, it seems to be disconnected from the requirements of any logical National Security Strategy; to take little account of their utility relative to cost; their obvious effectiveness (in UK forces, as well as in the US National Guard and the Israeli Defence Force), the need to improve the MoD’s ability to contribute towards homeland security, the development of a more unified British society, the military value attached to their ‘civilian skills’; and the need to find a way to base the forces within the UK at a sustainable cost.

The MoD seems to be a reluctant user of its reserve forces, (except as a personnel pool to backfill regular units, mostly with junior ranks), yet it is hard to understand why. It seldom deploys the reserves as formed units to its theatres of operation ... This is in stark contrast to the US, which routinely deploys its National Guard brigades to Afghanistan now, having made regular use of them in Iraq for years; maintains a third of their air-air combat aircraft within the National Guard, and deploys formed National Guard aviation squadrons to support its elite Tier-One special forces units or the Israeli Defence Force whose Air Force pilots are almost all reservists. This denies the MoD the ability to reduce the strain on the regular forces when operations endure (at home, in the case of air-air combat aircraft, or homeland security and abroad in terms of conducting stabilisation operations).

Lamb and Williams argue that the size of the Reserve Forces should increased and the manpower used to provide formed Army units, including combat infantry battalions; to become the custodian of the majority of the Army’s heavy, conventional combat capabilities required for ‘traditional Cold War’
style conflict, including armoured corps and infantry and heavy artillery; to take responsibility for air-air combat, deep strike bombing, maritime surveillance and interdiction capability, coastal waters support and some low-readiness deep-water tasks.

The alternative view often posited is that the size of the Reserve Forces should be reduced and effort put into maintaining a good size of well equipped regulars held at high readiness.

Both of these views recognise the fact that the MoD has never had a clear policy and vision for the UK’s Reserve Forces: the use of reservists has tended to be ad hoc and reactive. However, neither is particularly helpful in looking at how to use and structure the reserves for future military tasks. Both views ignore the fact that the Regular Forces will increasingly have to rely on alternative forms of manpower, including reserves and contractors, to meet future core military tasks that are enduring and short notice, and often of small and medium scale. The capabilities demanded by these future tasks and the future character of conflict will often be specialist; it will be difficult for the regular forces to develop this range of skills while still maintaining existing high-end capabilities and meeting general duty and standing commitments. Therefore, integration of alternative manpower with regular structures will be essential. Lamb and Williams ignore the contextual factors that define the structure and use of forces like the US National Guard, not least the scale and mass of the components and the fact that many personnel are actually employed full time. These factors allow the reserve component to achieve high readiness and maintain technologically sophisticated capabilities in formed units.

Applying lessons from a range of countries to the UK, evidence shows that emphasis should be placed on:

1. Adequate force development, defined by integrated regular and reserve formations, chains of command and training, and common standards for the regular and reserve components
2. Developing an intelligent force generation process to meet the specific requirements of different tasks.

This should be undertaken instead of identifying a precise, fixed structure for reserve forces per se.

The use of individual reservists versus formed reserve units – or the balance between the two – will vary between the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force and, perhaps more importantly, by task; but both have a role to play.
Overall, the Volunteer Reserve should build capability packages that can be sustained at higher levels of readiness in an inactive duty status and deployed with a minimum of pre-deployment training. This points towards non-complex platforms and systems, or specialist capabilities that draw on civilian skills and are not held within the regular component. It is notable that the demand for particular skills from the reserves is likely to be higher than the demand for general duty manpower or the provision of ‘platforms’. Individuals are also likely to have higher readiness levels and this should guide future recruitment activity.

Even at lower readiness levels, it will be difficult for reserve units and sub-units to maintain full-spectrum capabilities where the complexity of modern systems is high and, as a result, the levels of training and use required to maintain proficiency are substantial. Contracts with industry might help overcome this. Reserve units could, however, maintain capabilities in less technically complex areas such as combat support and combat service support more easily – capabilities which can also be deployed over a longer time period. Alternatively, they could easily perform enduring low intensity and low readiness tasks.

Clearly, the UK needs to move to a position where there is a spectrum of employment: where industry and reserves are integrated into regular structures against readiness assumptions and agile force generation requirements, and where employment models enable a more fluid and flexible mix and transfer of military, contractor and civilian staff, on demand and through career. This in turn requires agile terms and conditions of service and a much closer and more sophisticated relationship between the MoD, private sector and society.

Overall, this will help achieve better value for money over time while still maintaining operational effectiveness and readiness. It will also go a long way towards meeting the requirements of the Military Covenant and 2009 Reserves Proposition, which first and foremost require a clear statement of purpose for force components, as use in turn drives welfare and other requirements.

The government needs to focus on flexible, adaptable and intelligent force generation to meet the demands and challenges of the future strategic context and future character of conflict. This is not as ‘exciting’ as proposing an entirely new structure for the UK’s Reserve Forces, such as a UK National Guard with many formed units and sub-units. But it is the sophisticated and perhaps even subtle use and combination of a wide range of skills, abilities and attributes of different individuals and formations that will give the armed forces an edge in fulfilling their Military Tasks. Moreover, setting up a new structure (notwithstanding the inherent difficulties of achieving
any such ambition, in terms of scale and resourcing) will only invert the existing criticisms of the balance of force components at a later date: the emphasis must be on integrating regular and reserve components, and not establishing silos, as ‘non-regular’ manpower will be integral to achieving Defence outputs in the future. The Ministry of Defence and others should no longer look at the military in a binary way, as consisting of regulars and reserves and external support. This is as much a cultural change, requiring leadership, as it is about organisational and structural changes.

Notes and References

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