



# CANADA'S CITIZEN SOLDIERS: A DISCUSSION PAPER

**David Pratt** | March 2011

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The Honourable David Pratt, P.C. is Senior Vice President of Public Affairs for GCI Canada. Mr. Pratt served as an elected representative at the municipal, regional and federal levels for 16 years. He was first elected to the House of Commons for Nepean-Carleton in 1997. He also chaired the first Liberal Caucus Committee on Foreign Affairs, National Defence and International Cooperation and was as a member of the Justice Committee's Sub-Committee on National Security. He served as a Special Envoy to Sierra Leone under two foreign affairs ministers, was involved extensively in promoting more Canadian assistance to the war torn country, and introduced legislation on "conflict diamonds".

He was Chair of the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs from 2001 to 2003. Mr. Pratt was appointed as Canada's 36th Minister of National Defence in December, 2003 in the Government of the Rt. Hon. Paul Martin, P.C.

From late 2004-2008, he served as Special Advisor to the Secretary General of the Canadian Red Cross (CRC) where his focus was on issues related to international humanitarian law, the control of small arms and light weapons and government relations. He also led the CRC's "Auxiliary to Government" project which promoted a new relationship between the CRC and governments at all levels. In 2009 and 2010, Mr. Pratt worked as a consultant on a democracy promotion project in Baghdad as part of a USAID effort to support the Iraqi Parliament.

The opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Canadian International Council, its Senate or its Board of Directors, or the views of the Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recent years, strategic thinking and military restructuring have been confounded, not only by the uncertainties of the threat environment, but also by significant budget restraints. The latter has had important implications for the size of military forces, equipment purchases, training and potential commitments. One of the areas to which many have looked to help mitigate the lack of resources and for ensuring the long term viability of an effective military is the Reserve Forces. How best to make use of the Reserve component has become an important matter of concern not only for Canada, but for many of our allies as well.

This report is an initial attempt to highlight some of the more important issues facing the Canadian Army Reserve. The report does not pretend to have all the answers, but is an important first step in promoting what is hoped will be a wider ranging examination of the Reserve and its role as part of an effective and modern Canadian military. The report recognizes the important contribution made by the Reserve to deployments in the post-Cold War era and argues that the experience gained must be built upon in order to ensure an effective Reserve Force for the future.

The first section deals briefly with the implications of recent expenditure reductions for Canadian and other allied militaries. As well, it provides a brief discussion of the importance allied defence establishments are placing on their Reserves. It then goes on to provide a brief historical background on the evolution of the Canadian Army Reserve and what successive governments have done with regard to its development.

Next, the report provides a discussion of the changing strategic environment and its implications for the Canadian Forces. This section places particular emphasis on the importance of 9/11 and the subsequent need to re-evaluate our strategic assumptions and force structures. The discussion is pursued in light of various reports and studies done by governments and parliamentary fora in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks.

The subsequent section provides a review of the Regular and Reserve force structures as well as a discussion of the CF transformation launched by the then Chief of the Defence Staff General Rick Hillier. There is also an analysis of the Canada First Defence Strategy (CFDS) announced by the Harper Government in 2008. Also addressed are the Command and Control (C2) challenges related to the effective management of operations that combine military and civilian capabilities in foreign and domestic settings. It is argued that if we are to achieve a unified vision and more integration within the CF then the Regular and Reserve forces will have to work together very closely. The efficient use of the Army Reserve is critical to the sustainability of Canada's land forces into the future.

The report supports a recent view expressed by LGen Leslie concerning the need to reduce headquarters staff in order to better support the field force and examines the idea of a divisional model where Canada's three Regular Force Brigades would comprise the 1<sup>st</sup> Division and an unspecified number of Reserve Brigades the 2<sup>nd</sup> division. The primary role of the former would be expeditionary deployments with support to domestic operations while that of the latter would be domestic deployments with support to expeditionary operations. Each division would contain a certain percentage of Reservists and Regulars, thereby providing for a degree of "cross-fertilization". The pros and cons of the idea are also laid out. A variety of other important issues facing the Reserve are also discussed including budgets, recruitment and training, retention rates and medical care. Also examined is the question of whether or not the Reserve should have their own chain of command. In the end, the report supports the "integrationist" position while noting that the "separationists" and those calling for reforms have some valid points as well. The report supports the conclusion that Canada needs one army with the Army Reserve being an integral component thereof under one chain of command.

In discussing the question of mobilization, the report brings the debate over the Reserve into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It contains a critique of the long standing argument on behalf of stage four or mass mobilization as a core role for the Reserve. This role, the report concludes, should simply be abandoned. In the present and foreseeable future strategic environment, a focus on mass mobilization simply makes no sense. The future roles laid out for the Reserve "must be realistic insofar as the strategic environment is concerned and affordable from the

standpoint of force size, training and equipment". Today, the Reserves are an integral part of the CF family, but they need roles that are relevant in a modern context to the people they serve.

Having dispensed with mass mobilization as a key role for the Reserve, there remain those of augmentation and the Reserve "footprint" in the community. The former is self-explanatory, but the latter is one we may do well to further develop. The Reserve is more representative of the ethnic diversity of Canadian communities than the Regular Force. It also brings recruits with skills not always readily found amongst those who decide to make the military their first career choice. Therefore, it is important that we provide the Reserve with meaningful tasks or roles where young recruits feel they are making a significant and intelligent contribution to their community and nation. The report offers some do-able examples in this regard; one of the more intriguing being that of cyber-defence.

The report also provides insights into the "culture" of the Reserve Force and its relationship to the Regulars. While the relationship has not always been an easy one, it has improved significantly. Much of this is due to the respect generated by Reservists in deployments to the Balkans and Afghanistan. Also recognized is the important role tradition has played with respect to the Militia and the "veneration" of historic regiments. However, while paying tradition its due, the report provides an argument for the need to stay abreast of today's realities and the necessity for change.

The paper surveys a variety of programs in place among allied countries and suggests that we take a serious look at adopting the recommendations recently made by the C.D. Howe Institute concerning employer support.

The basic message conveyed is that, if we expect the Reserve to honour its commitment to serve when called upon, then it is our responsibility as a society to ensure that they are able to do so. The responsibility is mutual. The report argues that if we consider the Reserve to be an important national institution, then its long term well-being cannot be left to a few individuals in the Reserve community, the senior command of the CF, a few pundits and a select group of senior bureaucrats. It should rather be decided by open and public debate that involves outreach to the public and important stakeholders through either a Special Commission or some form of parliamentary study.

## SOMMAIRE

Ces dernières années, on a confondu pensée stratégique et restructuration militaire. Incertitude quant aux menaces, certes, mais aussi sérieuses restrictions budgétaires qui ont joué sur la taille des forces armées, sur l'acquisition de matériel, sur l'entraînement et sur les engagements à prendre.

Aussi, pour pallier au manque de ressources et assurer la viabilité à long terme d'une armée efficace, s'est-on tourné vers la force de réserve. Reste à savoir comment faire le meilleur usage de cette composante? La même question se pose à nos alliés.

Nous tentons, dans ce rapport, de signaler quelques-uns des gros défis auxquels fait face la réserve de l'Armée canadienne. Nous ne prétendons pas avoir toutes les réponses, mais c'est une première étape importante. Il faudrait en effet poursuivre un examen plus approfondi de la réserve et de son rôle dans une force militaire canadienne efficace et moderne.

Nous faisons état de la contribution importante de la réserve aux interventions qui ont suivi la guerre froide et jugeons que l'expérience acquise devrait permettre d'étayer une force de réserve efficace.

La première partie du rapport traite brièvement des implications des récentes compressions budgétaires pour la force militaire canadienne et pour celle d'autres pays alliés. Nous rappelons brièvement l'importance que les alliés accordent à leur réserve. Suit un bref historique de l'évolution de la réserve de l'armée canadienne et de ce que les gouvernements successifs ont fait quant à son développement.

Nous évoquons ensuite l'évolution du contexte stratégique et ses implications pour les forces canadiennes. Cette section met un accent particulier sur l'importance du Onze Septembre qui a obligé à réévaluer nos hypothèses stratégiques et les structures de nos forces militaires.

La discussion se poursuit à la lumière de divers rapports et études émanant du gouvernement et de forums parlementaires dans le sillage des attaques terroristes. Nous passons ensuite à un examen de la structure des forces régulières et des forces de réserve et de la transformation des FC entreprise par le Général Rick Hillier, ancien chef de l'état-major de la Défense. Nous analysons aussi la Stratégie de défense *Le Canada d'abord*, annoncée par le gouvernement Harper en 2008, les défis du Commandement et Contrôle (C2) quant à la gestion efficace d'opérations combinant capacités militaires et civiles dans des cadres d'opération à l'étranger et au Canada. Nous soutenons que si nous voulons parvenir à une vision unifiée et à une plus grande intégration des FC, les forces régulières et les forces de réserve devront œuvrer en très étroite collaboration. Une utilisation efficace de la réserve de l'armée de terre est critique pour la durabilité des forces terrestres.

Le rapport défend un point de vue récent exprimé par le L.Gén Leslie concernant la nécessité de réduire le personnel du quartier général afin de mieux soutenir la force sur le terrain, et avance l'idée d'un modèle divisionnaire, où les trois brigades des forces régulières seraient la 1<sup>ère</sup> Division et un nombre non spécifié de brigades de réserve, la 2<sup>ème</sup> Division. Le rôle fondamental de la première serait les déploiements expéditionnaires avec soutien aux opérations intérieures alors que celui de la seconde serait les déploiements intérieurs avec appui aux opérations expéditionnaires. Chaque division compterait un pourcentage de réservistes et de réguliers, favorisant une certaine intégration. Nous présentons le pour et le contre. Le rapport aborde tout un éventail d'autres questions concernant la réserve, notamment les budgets, le recrutement et l'entraînement, les taux de rétention et les soins médicaux. Nous examinons en outre si, oui ou non, la réserve devrait avoir sa propre chaîne de commandement. Enfin, le rapport soutient la position « intégrationniste » tout en reconnaissant que les « séparationnistes » et ceux qui réclament des réformes ont eux aussi des arguments valides. Le rapport conclut que le Canada a besoin d'une armée dont la réserve est une composante intégrale sous une seule chaîne de commandement. En discutant de la mobilisation, le rapport situe dans le 21<sup>e</sup> siècle le débat sur la Réserve.

Il comporte une critique du vieil argument selon lequel la quatrième étape, la mobilisation de masse est le premier rôle de la réserve. Ce rôle devrait simplement être abandonné. Dans le contexte stratégique actuel et futur, centrer le débat sur une mobilisation de masse n'a simplement aucun sens. Les rôles futurs de la réserve « doivent être réalistes dans le contexte stratégique et possibles si l'on considère son effectif, son entraînement et son équipement ». Aujourd'hui, la réserve fait partie intégrante de la famille des FC, mais elle doit avoir un rôle qui, dans un contexte moderne, a quelque pertinence pour la population qu'elle sert.

La mobilisation de masse n'étant plus considérée comme un rôle clé pour la Réserve, reste l'augmentation et de « l'empreinte » de la réserve dans la communauté. Le premier rôle est clair, mais le second mérite peut-être d'être accentué. La réserve est plus représentative de la diversité ethnique de la population canadienne que la force régulière. Elle apporte aussi des recrues possédant des compétences qui ne se trouvent pas toujours facilement chez ceux qui décident de faire carrière dans l'armée. Il est donc important de confier à la réserve des tâches et des rôles qui permettent aux jeunes recrues de sentir qu'elles apportent une contribution significative et intelligente à leur communauté et à leur pays. Le rapport offre quelques exemples pratiques à cet égard, notamment dans le domaine de la cyberdéfense.

Le rapport donne aussi une meilleure idée de la « culture » de la Force de réserve et de sa relation avec les forces régulières. Même si cette relation n'a pas toujours été facile, elle s'est sensiblement améliorée. Ceci, en partie, grâce au respect qu'ont inspiré les réservistes déployés aux Balkans et en Afghanistan. Le rapport s'arrête aussi sur le rôle majeur de la tradition quant à la milice et à la « vénération » des régiments historiques. Toutefois, il expose aussi combien il est nécessaire de considérer les réalités actuelles et les changements qu'elles imposent.

Enfin, le rapport traite de la vieille question du soutien accordé par les employeurs aux réservistes. La question fondamentale est la suivante : « quelle est la responsabilité du pays envers les réservistes et leurs familles quand on fait appel à leurs services ? » Le rapport suggère que si nous voulons pouvoir compter sur notre réserve, nous devons repenser la façon dont nous la soutenons. Au Canada, les programmes de protection des emplois varient selon les provinces et selon qu'ils relèvent ou non du gouvernement fédéral. Il faudrait une certaine constance. En même temps, il est important que les employeurs, qui supportent les coûts de remplacement des employés qui servent ainsi la nation, puissent bénéficier de quelque soutien. Nous passons en revue un certain nombre de programmes existant dans les pays alliés et suggérons d'envisager sérieusement d'adopter les recommandations récentes du C.D. Howe Institute au chapitre du soutien de l'employeur.

Le message fondamental de ce rapport est que, si nous nous attendons à ce que la réserve honore son engagement à servir quand on fait appel à elle, nous devons, en tant que société, veiller à ce qu'elle soit en mesure de le faire. C'est une responsabilité mutuelle. Si nous considérons que la réserve est une institution nationale importante, son avenir à long terme ne peut être décidé par quelques uns de ses représentants, le haut commandement des FC, quelques pontes et hauts fonctionnaires. L'avenir de la réserve doit faire l'objet d'un débat ouvert et public. Une commission spéciale ou une forme quelconque d'étude parlementaire s'impose.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

(In the absence of a positive response to Recommendation One, other actions should be taken independently by the DND/CF and the Government of Canada.)

1. That the Government of Canada undertake a comprehensive study of the Army Reserve either through a Special Commission or through the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence to review: a) the roles of the Reserve, b) budget allocations to the Reserve, c) administrative and other problems relating to recruitment, pay, training and equipment, d) the results of the CF "transformation" exercise as they affect the Reserve, e) "cultural" issues between the Reserve and the Regular Force, and e) any other matter the Commission/Committee deems appropriate for the effective and efficient functioning of the Reserve;
2. That the DND/CF undertake an internal study of the roles of the Reserve;
3. That the DND/CF take action to address problems in the recruiting and pay systems;
4. That the DND/CF take action to improve the recruitment of women, visible minorities and aboriginals;
5. That the follow-up report from the Ombudsman's office entitled "*Reserved Care: An Investigation into the Treatment of Injured Reservists*" be completed as soon as possible and that a plan be developed to assist Reservists who experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder after they leave the CF;
6. That DND/CF study and consider the establishment of the Office of the Inspector General to investigate complaints and conduct investigations related to effectiveness and efficiency with the department and the CF;
7. That the Government of Canada re-examine the four stage mobilization/activation framework contained in the 1994 White Paper to ensure that it reflects current needs and is consistent with the Government's overall plan for emergency planning and preparedness and take whatever follow on action is required;
8. That the DND/CF take action to expand its presence on university campuses and consider new recruiting programming similar to the Canadian Officer Training Program;
9. That the DND/CF examine the National Defence Act with a view to identifying possible amendments to the Act that would be required for the Reserve to play a more substantive role in domestic operations;
10. That the DND/CF continue to strengthen its relationship with provincial emergency management officials to ensure that all the necessary protocols and arrangements are in place to expedite CF assistance during emergencies;
11. That the DND/CF investigate a possible role for the Reserve in the area of cyber defence and security in support of the CF Network Operations Centre and the Government's overall Cyber Security Strategy;
12. That the Government of Canada and the DND/CF take action to implement a program of job protection and employer support for Canada's Reservists based upon recent proposals by the C.D. Howe Institute.

## STRATEGIC STUDIES WORKING GROUP

The Strategic Studies Working Group (SSWG) is a joint venture between the Canadian International Council (CIC) and the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute (CDFAI). The CIC absorbed the former Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies (CISS) upon the CIC's formation in 2008, and the CISS's original focus is now executed by the SSWG.