



DEFENCE POLICE FEDERATION
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THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE
(Report by Mr Trevor Woolley)

Executive Summary¹

Introduction

1. In early 2009 I was invited by PUS to conduct a scoping analysis of the issues facing the MDP and to provide advice on how these issues might be addressed. I concluded that there should be a two-phase approach, with the first phase reported here focusing on the role of the MDP, and the second phase examining the implications of that role for pay, terms and conditions of service and related HR issues.

2. The strategic vision of the Agency is to provide high quality civil policing, guarding and armed security in support of the UK's defence and the Statement of Requirement relating to the MDP, endorsed by the Defence Operating Board in September 2008, identifies seven key outputs as follows:

- a. Contributing to Defence policing policy.
- b. Armed security; the capability to deter and to respond to an armed attack on MOD assets.
- c. Protection of the Strategic Nuclear Deterrent.
- d. Defence business continuity: the ability to reinforce the protection of defence personnel and property.
- e. Community and other specialist policing.
- f. Criminal investigations: the prevention, detection and investigation of crime that impacts significantly against Defence capability and recovery of stolen assets;
- g. International capability: provision of contribution to wider defence and foreign policy and objectives.

¹ This paper is annotated in italics to indicate further work being undertaken by, or the views of, the Director of Business Resilience. As MoD's Security Process Owner and Department Security Officer, it is DBR's role to advise Ministers, PUS and the Defence Board as necessary on issues raised in Mr Woolley's report.

Approach

3. Recognising that the shape of the MDP has been formed by customer requirements, I have considered whether this shape is coherent from both a pan Defence and a pan Government perspective. I have examined the extent to which the capabilities of the MDP might have utility for non Defence customers and whether Defence requirements might be met more effectively by other police providers. I visited a large number of locations where MDP are stationed including all the Divisional headquarters and consulted a range of stakeholders within the Department and outside. I was assisted by Sir Chris Fox, the former Chief Constable of Northamptonshire and a former President of ACPO.

Armed Security

4. Aside from the use of Service personnel, there are two armed security providers – the MDP and the Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS). On current plans, the latter will increase to nearly 4,000 by April 2011. The roles and capabilities are different in that the MPGS is essentially a guard service, providing armed guarding at entry points and armed patrols behind the wire. The MDP, by contrast, provide ‘defensive armed policing’, are authorised to carry arms outside the wire, and (unlike the MPGS) have constabulary powers. As well as firearms, they may also have less lethal weapons such as the baton gun and taser.

5. To some extent, the choice of armed security provider is founded on rational customer choice as to the specific capabilities a particular site requires. The MDP are the logical preferred provider of armed security at sites where constabulary powers are likely to be needed – such as where protester activity might be expected. But in most locations the effect required of the MPGS and MDP is the same – deter and deny – even if the concept of operations is different. The determinant of security provider is in reality, in most cases, whether the location is one where Service personnel have historically provided their own security (and where they are now largely being replaced by MPGS as resources become available), or whether it is one where Service personnel have not historically provided armed security, where the role is undertaken by the MDP.

6. Armed guarding policy in the MOD was subject to the DGSS Armed Guarding Review in 2007. The key recommendation of the Review was to reduce the categories of site that required 24/7 armed guarding. This, combined with an improved approach to risk-management, was expected to result in a reduction in the requirement for armed security; but this has not happened. The main reason for this is that decisions about whether a particular site required armed guarding were delegated down the command/management chain to a level below the granularity of available threat information, and at which judgements about the damage an armed attack could cause inevitably became highly subjective.

7. I recommend that the determination of which MOD sites require dedicated armed security be made centrally by MOD against very specific

criteria agreed by the Defence Board and Ministers. *This recommendation is under consideration by DBR. Views of stakeholders inside and outside MoD are currently being sought.*

8. The requirement for armed security should be proportionate and judged in relation to the consequence for operational capability of a terrorist attack. It should take account of the assets located at particular sites and might well result in fewer sites needing 24/7 armed guarding. This would reduce the requirement for both MPGS and MDP, with potentially significant financial savings. Further work is needed to assess the potential requirement for additional MGS and any mitigation along the lines discussed below. *This recommendation is under consideration by DBR. Views of stakeholders inside and outside MoD are currently being sought.*

9. Any substantial reduction in the requirement for armed security should be implemented over a period of years in order to maximise drawdown by natural wastage. If this approach were judged too radical, two possible mitigations would be available:

- a. increase the number of Unit Beat Officers provided by the MDP;
- b. increase the number of area mobile patrols by armed MDP to provide an intelligence gathering and deterrent capability as well as a limited armed response capability, although not an immediate one.

These ideas are under consideration by DBR. Views of stakeholders inside and outside MoD are currently being sought.

Protection of the Deterrent

10. Few would challenge the need for armed protection of nuclear assets, both at bases and in road convoys. Currently both the Royal Marines and the MDP are engaged in the security of nuclear assets at different stages in their life cycle. My view is that the security of defence property on the public highway and civilian establishments is principally a policing role; at Naval bases and armament depots there is potentially a stronger case for a military component. I recommend that further work be done to ensure the most effective protective arrangements are in place in both areas. *This work is now in hand.*

Defence Business Continuity

11. The statement of requirement identifies a need to reinforce the protection of defence personnel and property through the ability to redeploy resources and provide specialist capabilities between tasks, locations and TLBs. It is clearly sensible that the MDP has a deployable reserve capability of this kind; it is less clear what its scale should be. The size of the Armed Forces is determined by Defence Planning Assumptions, which set the scale, concurrency and endurance of operations, which the force structure should be designed to undertake. I recommend that DBR draw up a similar set of assumptions for the MDP's contingent capability. *This recommendation is agreed by DBR.*

Community and other Specialist Policing

12. The Unit Beat Officer role is a generally new role for the MDP, but is particularly valued in circumstances in which the resident unit is deployed overseas on operations. In principle MDP could buy in UBO capacity from territorial police forces, but as there is strong customer satisfaction with the MDP continuation of the current arrangements is recommended. *This recommendation is agreed by DBR.*

Criminal Investigation

13. The nature of the Defence business makes it vulnerable to certain kinds of crime, particularly theft, procurement fraud and corruption. The Department clearly needs access to a criminal investigation capability. Criminal investigation is not a niche policing skill which obviously fits into a specialist police force such as the MDP. The Department could rely on territorial police forces for this service, but defence crime would not necessarily be given sufficient priority and it is likely that overall less crime would be investigated. Given the scale and potential scale of defence crime, the cost of the MDP CID at £10M a year seems likely to represent value for money. In view of the size of the fraud squad, and the expertise it has developed in procurement fraud, there may be merit in it taking on a wider Governmental role. I recommend that this should be pursued further. Planning assumptions should be drawn up to scale the CID requirement. *These recommendations are agreed in principle by DBR.*

International Policing

14. The MDP currently have 49 officers serving overseas which represents 40% of the UK's overall international policing effort. The MDP have frequently been the force of choice because a high proportion are firearms trained and it is usually easier to release MDP officers. The management of international policing is complex and evolving. There are questions about what the level of the UK's contribution to international policing should be, how effective it is, and whether we have the right management and coordinating structures-but this is beyond the scope of my study. While the MDP should be ready to commit to around the current level of international policing, no specific complement should be created. *This recommendation is agreed in principle by DBR.*

A Pan-Government Approach

15. MDP already serves customers beyond MOD through its presence at certain CNI sites and there is no obvious reason why the MDP should not continue to undertake this role. However it appears both inefficient and anomalous that there should be two different national police forces (MDP and CNC) providing armed security for the UK's nuclear assets.

16. Economies of scale and increases in effectiveness might be expected to result from the creation of a police force of greater size than either of the existing forces. A merged MDP/CNC would offer greater resilience and have some albeit limited advantages in people management. Achieving a merger

would be a considerable undertaking and there would be a need, almost certainly, for primary legislation. Such a merged police force would probably need to be a Home Office police force. Terms and conditions of service for the two forces would need to be aligned and funding arrangements would need to be put in place.

17. There might be advantage—at least as a transitional stage—in focusing on interoperability between the two forces rather than full merger. But this would be a second best outcome which should be pursued only if inter-Departmental agreement to a full merger is unforthcoming. I recommend that MOD Ministers be invited to engage with Ministerial colleagues with a view to agreeing in principle to a future merger; or failing that, to a move towards greater interoperability. *DBR believes more work needs to be done, including testing the enthusiasm at senior levels in other departments, before taking forward the recommendation for a merged police force. But the recommendation for focussing on interoperability between MDP and CNC is accepted in principle regardless of the eventual outcome on merger.*

Other Defence Police/Security Forces

18. I have neither considered the Northern Ireland Guard Service nor the Gibraltar Police Service which are beyond scope. I have briefly looked at the SBAA Police Force, but the SBAA police role is unique and quite unlike the core role of the MDP. I judge that the effort required to incorporate the SBAA Police in the MDP would be disproportionate to the advantages which would obtain. *This recommendation is agreed by DBR.*

Conclusions

19. The MDP has evolved in response to the demands of MOD customers. It has significant strengths in a relatively few specialist areas; firearms, protester control and removal; security vigilance; maritime policing, dogs, and fraud. I have assessed the coherence of this capability in the context of the availability of alternative providers of these outputs. My conclusions have been the product of wide consultation and I believe they form a sound basis for the way forward.