



REFLECTIONS ON DEFENDING AN INDEPENDENT SCOTLAND

A VIEW FROM IRELAND

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ACC</i>	<i>Aid to the Civil Community</i>
<i>ACP</i>	<i>Aid to the Civil Power</i>
<i>APC</i>	<i>Armoured Personnel Carrier</i>
<i>DOD</i>	<i>Department of Defence (Irish)</i>
<i>EOD</i>	<i>Explosive Ordnance Disposal</i>
<i>EOR</i>	<i>Explosive Ordnance Reconnaissance</i>
<i>IDF</i>	<i>Irish Defence Forces (abbreviation used for this paper only)</i>
<i>MoD</i>	<i>Ministry of Defence (UK)</i>
<i>NBC</i>	<i>Nuclear Biological and Chemical</i>
<i>OOB</i>	<i>Order of Battle</i>
<i>PSO</i>	<i>Peace Support Operations</i>
<i>RA</i>	<i>Representative Associations</i>
<i>RUSI</i>	<i>Royal United Services Institute</i>
<i>SA</i>	<i>Scottish Army</i>
<i>SAF</i>	<i>Scottish Air Force</i>
<i>SAR</i>	<i>Search and Rescue</i>
<i>SDF</i>	<i>Scottish Defence Forces</i>
<i>SIPRI</i>	<i>Stockholm International Peace Research Institute</i>

INTRODUCTION

The people of Scotland will vote in a Referendum, on 18 Sept 2014, to decide on whether Scotland will declare for, or against, independence from the UK.

In the event of a YES vote, an Independent Scotland will need to have its own Defence Forces to assure its freedom, underline its sovereignty, and provide for a secure environment for its people to live, and prosper.

The object of this paper is to explore how the SDF (Scottish Defence Forces) could be established, with particular reference to lessons learned from the Irish experience.

The Paper also presents aspects which might be considered in the formulation of a Scottish Defence Policy, and options on how the military aspect of such a policy could be implemented.

While Ireland may no longer offer a model of how an Independent Scotland should run its economy, in other areas Ireland has shown that independence is very much viable. Scotland can learn from our experience, both from what we got right, and from what we got wrong. This is true also in the politico-military area.

Freed from the need to contribute to UK's strategic military commitments, Scotland can reduce its military spending very substantially, to the potential new state's economic advantage. Overall, I believe that the options on the defence issue will support the case for a Yes vote in the Referendum.

BREAKING THE LINK

The concept of Independence in this day and age needs to be addressed, before we consider how best to defend it. Independence is no longer an absolute. There are no longer totally independent states. We are interdependent as never before, sharing, even aspects of our sovereignty, with each other. To paraphrase an old Irish saying, "We all live in each other's shadow". ***Scotland, like Ireland, will have to confront to what degree it aspires to independence, and, in which areas, it will accept being dependent.*** In this regard, an Independent Scotland will have to make compromises in order to coexist with its neighbours, especially the UK. This is particularly the case in relation to a Defence Policy.

For example, Scotland will most likely have to give assurances to UK that Scotland's land, sea and airspace, will not be used by a potential enemy to attack the UK. Scotland will have to have the military means to back up these assurances. This will apply whether Scotland is a member of NATO or not. Nevertheless, a Scotland that is weak, militarily, could be seen to present problems for the UK.

Of course, if Scotland is a member of NATO, Scotland and the UK will be committed to mutual defence under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.

In breaking the link the question of the UK nuclear fleet being based at Faslane will have to be top of the Agenda for discussion. Calls for its withdrawal will put at risk many MoD jobs in the region.

At this stage in the debate, we do not know how the peoples of the rest of UK will react to the prospects of Scotland leaving the UK. Such a diminution of UK's sovereignty may be very hard to sell politically in England, although perhaps a bit easier to accept in Wales and Northern Ireland. While the UK Government have agreed to the holding of the Referendum, UK ministers' contribution to the debate, so far, has been totally negative to the Independence proposal itself. The signs are not good. At worst, in the event of a YES outcome, the UK government might be pressured to obstruct Independence from happening. At best, the UK may extract a hard price, and concede as little as possible, in the subsequent negotiations required to implement the Independence decision.

Moreover, resistance to an Independent Scotland could come from political forces in the UK that fear the breakup of the UK itself.

At the UK military level, there it is unlikely to be much support either in UK, for Scotland going it alone. The UK defence implications, of breaking the link, would also need to be appreciated from the UK perspective, by Scottish Defence Planners.

ASSUMPTIONS

I would like, first, to make four assumptions. Perhaps those who are more familiar with the Scottish situation will say it is not necessary to point out the seemingly obvious. Nevertheless, I would like to outline these assumptions, as they put the rest of this paper in a certain context.

The **First** assumption is that the UK will, however reluctantly, agree to follow through on a YES outcome, including cooperation in the follow-up negotiations. (It is also possible, of course, that the UK could reject the YES outcome, legislate for more devolved powers to Scotland, and look for a re-run of the Referendum).

The **Second** assumption is that Scottish sovereignty will extend to the land territory of Scotland and its estimated 800 islands, including the Shetlands and the Orkneys, and to those seas off the Scottish mainland and islands. Within this assumption, Scotland will pursue its claims to disputed seas, and land, through negotiation. Such negotiations might also, in time, look at the present demarcation between Scotland and the UK, where ethnic Scottish and English enclaves may find themselves on the wrong side of the border. It is assumed also, that, while Scotland will argue for perhaps 10% of UK's Defence inventory, on the basis of its contribution to the UK Exchequer, it will not claim a similar proportion of the UK's overseas territorial holdings.

The **Third** assumption is that Scotland will join all four international organisations; the UN, EU, NATO and the Commonwealth. While there are objections from a sizable portion of the SNP to joining NATO, NATO solidarity would, in my view, best assure Scottish Defence, especially to its North and East. Moreover, future Defence cooperation with the UK would be enhanced by Scotland joining NATO (or continuing to be in NATO as argued by the SNP).

The **Fourth** assumption is that negotiations will lead to an eventual withdrawal of the UK nuclear deterrent from Faslane. This is already an SNP pre-condition for Scottish membership of NATO, and reflects the overwhelming view of the Scottish public. However, the timeframe for such a withdrawal has to take UK's strategic interests into account. The UK is currently reviewing how best to replace or upgrade its Trident fleet and Scottish Independence proposals have introduced an element of uncertainty into the review.

A LOGICAL APPROACH

So how should the Scots go about setting up the SDF? What should be its 'Order of Battle' (OOB), that is, what should be its strength, composition, inventory of equipment, organisation and deployment ?

The requirement should be addressed in a logical sequence, with pre-conceived ideas set aside. The SNP's outline Defence Policy, announced at their Party Conference on 15 Oct 12, is a good start, as far as it goes. However, in considering the parameters of the SDF it is best to start with a blank sheet of paper, and plan for an SDF that can best serve the implementation of an agreed Defence Policy. This Policy should define the political context and set down the **Roles** of the SDF. As in any business plan, the (military) assets required, should be those that are identified as necessary to carry out these roles, no more and no less.

The **Roles** of the SDF need to be analysed to identify the **tasks**, both specified and implied, that need to be fulfilled to carry out these roles. The next step is to list the military assets required to meet these tasks, including SDF strength, composition and an inventory of equipment.

The final step would be to consider the best organisation and deployment of the SDF, i.e., the most appropriate to fulfil its assigned roles.

ROLES OF THE SDF

In the current debate in Scotland, there is an emerging consensus on what the *Roles* of the SDF should be, and the proposals, outlined here, are broadly in line with this consensus. They are grouped under the following headings:-

---National Defence,

---Aid to the Civil Power(ACP),

---Aid to the Civil Community (ACC),and

---Participation in International Peace Support and Humanitarian Operations(PSO).

NATIONAL DEFENCE

The Primary Role of the SDF would be that of national defence.

In this day and age no country in the world can defend itself fully. Instead, national defence relies mainly on having sufficient forces to deter a potential enemy. Deterrence, in this case, means to convince an aggressor that invasion is not worth the cost it would entail. The level of defence required to deter an enemy will be influenced, inter alia, by its strategic importance. Also, in this time of resource wars, countries that have significant resources need to have a defence capability that would make it too costly for a potential enemy to invade and seize these resources.

The strategic importance of Scotland will increase with the on-going melting of the Arctic icecap. This will have profound implications for Scottish National Defence, with the opening of new shipping routes and increased access to energy resources. In the future, the SDF will be required to cooperate closely, not just with the UK, but also with Denmark, Norway and Iceland. This is a strong argument in favour of NATO membership for Scotland, as these nations cooperate and conduct exercises in the NATO framework.

The secession of Scotland from the UK would have serious implications for UK defence policy makers. The UK will still need to be able to project its influence worldwide, to protect its vital interests. As mentioned above, could or should the UK continue to locate its nuclear deterrence fleet at Faslane, for a period, perhaps under a treaty with Scotland? Scotland has lived with the presence of nuclear weapons for over 40 years without incident. Could it not live with this for a further 10 years? If so, who will defend this vital installation, which will be located in territory outside UK's national control?

A threat analysis needs to be made to assess Scotland's vulnerability to attack, top of which is the threat from International terrorism. Scotland's membership of NATO and participation in international peace support operations may, in time, increase the threat of attack from terrorist groups.

In the present climate, the possibility of a conventional, or nuclear, attack on Scotland, would appear to be extremely remote. Nevertheless, within the past hundred years Scotland has been a belligerent nation in two world wars, participated in numerous other conflicts, and, during the Cold War, has been under the shadow of nuclear attack.

The lessons of history have taught us that situations do change, and, in the long term, Scotland could be caught up in conflict between superpowers, not of its making. Such conflict could be conventional, nuclear, biological, chemical or environmental.

In this context, and no matter how unlikely, it is also necessary, academically, to address the possibility of uninvited, post-independence military action from the South. Such a scenario could arise if Scotland neglected its defences to the extent that the UK was at risk of attack by an enemy using, for example, Scottish air space.

However, the possibility of military intervention from the South is mentioned mainly to dismiss it. I am sure a UK that will accept Scottish Independence in the first place will not wish to overturn this step by use of military action. Moreover, during the 1939/45 Emergency (as the Second World War was known in Ireland), the UK respected Irish neutrality. At the height of the Battle of the Atlantic, the UK did not try to retake the vital ports they handed back to the Irish Free State in 1938, even though it's very survival was at stake. Nevertheless, some nationalist groups in Scotland see this scenario, and are advocating a very strong military posture by Scotland, including conscription.

Other questions might arise. What if regions of Scotland which voted NO in the Referendum, resist the move to Independence, call for partition and ask for UK assistance?

In my view, the most likely scenario is that the UK and Scotland will stand together in any future conflict that threatens these islands. (I use the term “these islands”, advisedly, as, in the event of Scottish Independence, the term “British Isles”, (which raises the ire of many Irish), will finally be redundant.

The SDF role in National Defence could be expressed in less absolute terms. Instead of an unrealistic role of total national defence, this role could be expressed as a commitment to *determined resistance to external aggression on land, sea and in the air*. For example, Scotland would not aspire to having its own Star Wars level of national air defence, but should have the means to provide full air defence of key strategic locations.

Many tasks under the heading of national defence can be envisaged.

AID TO THE CIVIL POWER (ACP)

Decisions have to be made whether the police, or the military, have the lead role for a variety of scenarios which may not necessarily, or initially, require a military response. In my opinion, if the threat is internal, rather than external, the concept should be that the police have the lead role .In principle, the military should only be called in by the police, when the situation requires military capabilities that they police do not have. This works reasonably well in Ireland and the legal systems are similar in both jurisdictions.

Terrorist attacks and cyber-attacks may fall into this category, but also, sometimes the police may need help from the military to deal with subversive and criminal incidents.

This role of the SDF will be called the ACP (Aid to the Civil Power) Role, to underline, in principle, that the SDF can only be deployed at the request of the Police. The qualification ‘in principle’ is necessary, because rare situations can arise, and in the case of Ireland have arisen, where military commanders, in the absence of police, have had to intervene to prevent loss of life.

However, it makes sense to assign certain ACP tasks permanently to the SDF, to avoid duplication of effort, and for tasks where the SDF has capabilities beyond the normal available to the police.

For example, in Ireland, dealing with improvised explosive devices is a military task. The Army teams of the Ordnance Corps have a great reputation, over the years, in dealing with improvised explosive devices, both at home and abroad. The SDF will have to have an EOD/EOR (Explosive Ordnance Disposal/Explosive Ordnance Reconnaissance) capability in the context of its primary role. These should be available on call to the police, if the police do not have such capabilities.

Again, the SDF will have to have defence capabilities to handle NBC (Nuclear Biological and Chemical) situations, which can be made available to the police.

The protection of oil and natural gas rigs requires a wide range of military assets, to the extent that it may be more practical to have the SDF permanently tasked in this area.

In Ireland, the primary inner responsibility for the security of the Dail rests with a Military Police unit, technically deployed under ACP legislation.

Lastly, because ceremonial guards, and escorts, of honour, evolved historically from protecting personages and buildings, the task of ceremonial duties is included under ACP. International protocol will require Scotland, as an independent nation, to provide military ceremonial honours to an extent similar to Ireland.

AID TO THE CIVIL COMMUNITY (ACC)

The third role of the SDF would be to assist the local authorities in dealing with emergency situations beyond their capabilities. Such emergencies may arise from natural or manmade disasters, or from industrial action.

The SDF will have exceptional assets that can assist in saving lives and property. It will be a disciplined force equipped with hardware not available to the local authorities, such as specialised transport, helicopters, field engineers, emergency bridging and emergency accommodation.

The SDF would only be a secondary agency in this role, on call by the civil authorities, for example the Department of the Environment or County Councils.

Tasks in this role can be truly mundane, and beneath the soldiers' level of training and expertise, but essential for the local community; for example, to augment the fire services in dealing with mountain gorse fires, or clearing refuse during a bin strike. Care should be taken not to abuse the use of the military, such as in clearing snow from shopping centres car parks or moving animal fodder in situations where commercial means are available.

Scotland will need its own search and rescue service (SAR). While following the Irish example of continuing with the RNLI, it will need to provide helicopter and naval support for SAR. I do not want to enter the debate here on whether this should be a military or civil task, or a combination of both.

However, I have a reservation on tasking the SDF to provide the SAR service, if SAR has to compete within a military budget for its resources. Still, contracting out this service can be very costly, as we know in Ireland.

PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL PEACE SUPPORT AND HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS

In my view, Scotland should not adopt the Irish 'Triple Lock' conditions for participation in peace support operations. The 'Triple Lock' means that three conditions must be present before Irish troops can be deployed overseas. These are; a Government decision, Dail approval, and UN approval. The problem here is UN approval, in that a veto by one permanent member of the Security Council will block Ireland from joining a mission. There may be proposed operations that have the full support of the EU, for example, but will fail to get the approval of all permanent members of the UN Security Council. Scotland may not want to exclude itself from participation in a mission, when it is in its national interest to participate. A 'triple lock' position could also limit Scotland's role in NATO.

An independent Scotland with a professional, well trained and a well-equipped, SDF, will be a welcome participant to any mission. Such involvement would be greatly appreciated by the international community, and would enhance Scottish foreign policy. Ireland's participation in UN peacekeeping operations has, on occasion, greatly helped getting a rotational seat on the UN Security Council. This might be of interest for those considering Scotland's future foreign policy objectives in the UN.

In time, as an independent nation Scotland will be accepted as an honest broker on peacekeeping missions, without the baggage of a colonial past. Like Ireland, the SDF will be asked to fill senior military positions in international missions. In this regard, Scotland could also look to Canada and Norway, two NATO member states that have played a high profile role in peacekeeping operations.

At the military level, for the SDF, this peacetime role presents the best opportunity to enhance training and leadership experience. It can be also be a major incentive towards recruitment and help develop career opportunities for serving personnel.

Starting from the beginning, Scotland should take into account its future Role overseas when considering the strength, composition and organisation of the SDF. The changing role of NATO and the emerging role of the EU in peace support operations (PSOs), have highlighted the need for nations to offer more specialist units. In this post-Cold War period, neither NATO nor the EU needs more armoured brigades, but they do need more air transports and helicopters. The Franco-Irish

led EU force in Chad was delayed for months due to the lack of helicopters being offered by Member States, which were considered essential for this mission.

At the same time, the risks involved in missions should be shared. The easy option of supplying combat service support troops only will not go down well. I believe that a balance should be struck. Scotland should aspire to have one combat unit (battalion of 500 to 750), abroad at any one time, along with one smaller specialised unit. This specialised unit could be a logistics unit, a Special Forces platoon, an EOD team, medical platoon, military police, or field engineers. Air and naval elements should be considered, as should military staff officers and military observers.

If and when a future independent Scotland considers its first involvement in a peacekeeping mission, I would recommend it should, like Ireland, start with participation in a military observer mission first, and build up its organisational knowledge of and experience in peacekeeping before committing troops on operations. This may help to reduce casualties.

Scotland will have to achieve interoperability with future partners on overseas missions. Interaction with other armed forces, joint exercises within, and outside, NATO, exchanges of military staff, and sending officers on foreign courses will enhance interoperability. Military attaches should be appointed to key major power nations, to keep abreast of developments in military technology. Unless, SDF is proactive in its outreach to other armed forces, it may, like other small armed forces, be out of the loop. Being out of the loop can have serious consequences, especially in the area of military health and safety related technology.

How many troops should an independent Scotland have abroad? In peacetime, Ireland has a self-imposed overall ceiling of 850 personnel abroad, at any one time. Given the proposed strength of the SDF, I would suggest that Scotland have a ceiling also, at about 1000 personnel. This may not seem a lot at first glance. However, if Scotland were, for example, to have 900 Army personnel abroad, at any one time, out of strength of 11,000(see below), in the case of multi tour missions, the overall number of personnel tied up, at times, could be in the region of 2,500. This would include replacement units at home under training, returning personnel on post mission leave, and home based cadres required to train and support overseas operations

Care should be taken to avoid personnel being sent abroad too frequently, and personnel should be given generous overseas allowances. The average incidence of overseas service for Irish soldiers is one six month tour of duty in every three years of service.

Finally, the presence of SDF units in UN, and other, peacekeeping missions, will be a potent symbol that Scotland has truly taken its place among the nations of the world.

SDF OPTIONS

There are, of course, many different options for creating the SDF. This Paper mentions options that meet the general consensus arrived at so far, in the current debate.

The obvious **first** option, which we can call the "**Continuity Option**", would be to create a SDF based on what can be transferred from, or left behind by, the departing UK armed forces.

The SNP favour this option and, as regards the Army, envisages the battalions of the Regiment of Scotland returning to Scotland to form the heart of the SA (Scottish Army). One great advantage would be the instant creation of a professional Army, and the retaining of the great military traditions of these units. However, while the UK could probably go along with this proposal, current personnel serving would have the option of continuing to serve in the UKAR (UK Army). How many would transfer to the SA? Another question should be considered; would the assets transferring to Scotland be those that are best required to fulfil the four roles envisaged above?

The **second** option, which we can call the "**Nordic Option**", has been very well presented by various experts, especially in Stuart Crawford and Richard March's paper; "**A' the Blue Bonnets: Defending an Independent Scotland**" (published by RUSI), which also draws, inter alia, on assessments made by David Chuter and Malcolm Chalmers. This option, drawing from the Danish, Norwegian and other experiences, envisages two brigades, a Regular Army Brigade with the battalions of the Regiment of Scotland, and a Reserve Army Brigade grouping units of the Territorial Army (Among western armies a brigade is regarded as a formation with combined arms capability(with infantry, armour and artillery), usually varying in strength from 3-5000 personnel). Their Paper also presents the best rationale for having the SDF in the first place.

The **third** option I suggest would be the “*Irish Option*”, again with two brigades, with a mix of Regular and Reserve personnel. This option involves integrating Regular and Reserves at unit level, and a wide geographical deployment in Scotland. It would be more flexible in that both Brigade HQs would be operational and have a total of six battalions, with 70% regular army personnel (for details see next paragraph). It would also provide Scotland the possibility of providing a Brigade HQ (150-180) for international missions, and give Scotland the capability of playing a lead nation role.

The wider geographic deployment would best facilitate the first three Roles of the SDF (National Defence, ACP and ACC). It would also favour recruitment, for both regular and reserve forces. The IDF (Irish Defence Forces) have, for historical and operational reasons, achieved the optimum geographical spread. Over 90% of the Irish (ROI) population of 4.6 million live within daily commuting distance of a major military post.

The **fourth** option, probably the best, is a variation of the three previous options, drawing together the best ideas to provide a Scottish solution for a Scottish situation. Let us call this the “*Scottish Option*.”

STRENGTH AND COMPOSITION OF THE SDF

The strength and composition of the SDF should offer the best and most cost effective option to Scotland to fulfil the four roles outlined above.

My first observation is that there can be only one set of forces to cover all roles. All units will have to be ready to participate in all four roles, but, of course, not at the same time.

Like Ireland, Scotland will have to face up to what the late Col E.D.Doyle described as the problems of the “Miniature Army”. This means that the SDF will have to have all the necessary support elements to ensure a functioning SDF and a complete infrastructure, irrespective of its size. Unlike in the larger armies, soldiers in smaller armed forces have to be ready to carry out a wide variety of tasks. This means much longer time spent in training. These soldiers should be encouraged to stay on and make a career in the military, so that the military can retain their expertise. As a result, soldiers in smaller armies are often much older than those in the larger armies.

The Scottish Army will have to have a conventional combined arms capability. Combat units, such as infantry and armour, will need combat support troops such as artillery and field engineer units. The three services (Army, Navy and Air Force) need to be able to conduct joint operations. All services need to have combat service support units, such as logistical units, medical etc.

The SDF will need to have a substantial Logistic Base and a separate communications system.

I believe that, unlike the Irish system, the three Services should be separate, with separate budgets, but sharing logistical and training facilities, where appropriate. There should be one DF HQ, a Joint HQ, with equal opportunity for officers of all three services to serve at every level.

As mentioned above, I recommend that the SA would have six battalions, comprising four mechanised infantry battalions, one mountain warfare battalion and one armoured battalion, grouped in two operational brigades.

To allow for sustainability of overseas operations, and to facilitate the annual unit training cycle, I would suggest that the Army would have a two brigade structure at 70% strength in peacetime, augmented to full strength by unit level integrated reserves, in wartime or in time of emergency. The Northern (Highland) Brigade should have two mechanised infantry battalions and one mountain warfare battalion. The Southern (Lowland) Brigade should have two mechanised infantry battalions and one tank battalion. Each Brigade would have a light artillery regiment, a reconnaissance company, a field engineer company, and logistical (including medical) and communications units.

Coming under direct SDF HQ control, I would also recommend a Special Forces Unit, and an air defence regiment.

The Army strength would be approx. 11,000 regulars and 5,000 integrated reservists.

A separate analysis is necessary to decide on the tasks of the SN (Scottish Navy). This is not my area of expertise but the SN would require a capacity to provide convoy escort, to conduct anti-submarine operations, fishery protection, interdiction

of illegal drug smuggling by sea, mine sweeping and possibly marine survey. The SN would not need submarines. At least one warship should be able to carry and deploy helicopters. The SN, in particular, would need to be able to work with other navies, in training and on operations. For example, the SN should have the sustainable capability to provide a warship to a UN/NATO/EU mission, such as on anti-piracy operations. Consideration should be given to having a marine infantry component, possibly a company (100-150), with an amphibious landing capability.

I would suggest a strength of approx. 2,500 regulars and 1,500 reservists. The latter would be a mix of integrated reserves and all reserve crews.

A Scottish Air Force (SAF) would need to have at least one operational combat squadron with a capability of providing air support to ground troops, a training squadron, a long range maritime air reconnaissance capability, at least one logistics aircraft and a substantial helicopter wing.

I would suggest a strength of 2,000 regulars and 1,000 reservists.

The overall suggested strength of the SDF would be about 15,500 regulars and 7,500 reservists.

TRAINING AND MILITARY EDUCATION

Training will be the main peacetime activity of the SDF. The SDF will have to have all the training schools necessary, functioning up to international standards. It will have to have training locations as diverse as small arms ranges, an artillery and anti-tank range, a FIBUA (fighting in built up areas) location and an air firing range. It will need to have training areas for its mechanised and tank battalions. Scotland may have to share training locations with the UK, to achieve a cost effective solution to its training locations requirement.

Only a Scottish Military College, Cadet School can properly provide for the development of the leadership qualities, with the idealism and commitment to serve Scotland. This is where those values of an officer should be inculcated from the beginning, values which should be upheld by those men and women who are chosen to lead throughout their career. The ethos should be Scottish.

All officers, of all three Services, should attend the first year at the one Cadet School, with Air and Naval Cadets moving to the Air and Naval Schools for the second year of Cadet training. In Ireland, graduate entrance is now the norm. In addition, every four or five years, potential officer courses are run to give NCOs the opportunity of achieving commissioned rank.

A Scottish Military College will take a lot of time to establish. In Ireland, it took nine years, from Independence, to establish the Military College (6 Oct 1930). Scotland will have to rely on sending personnel abroad for training, in the initial years. However, Scotland could have its own Cadet School up and running in a much shorter time frame.

THE SDF-A DISTINCTIVE BRAND

The SDF should present itself as a distinctive brand, and not just a regional variation of the UK Armed Forces. The UK armed forces, while greatly over stretched operationally, are, in my view, probably the most professional in the World. The initial reaction in Scotland might be to follow its example. However, Scotland's Defence Forces needs to present a separate image, one that emphasises its Scottishness, and that draws on Scottish traditions. This does not mean it rejects all things British. On the contrary, it should selectively draw from what is/was best in the British tradition. Just like Scotland itself, the future SDF should not air-brush out its British past. There are mixed lessons on this, from Ireland.

In the Irish Free State, the initial rejection of the British military tradition was understandable. Right up to the 1950s the entire leadership of the Government and the Defence Forces had fought in the War of Independence (1919-1921), and many participated in the Dublin 1916 Rising/Rebellion. After the Civil War ended (1923), the new National Army (as it was then called) looked to the US and Europe for technical military advice.

Officers were sent to US military training schools, and despite a fair number of officers having served in the UK Army, the Army of the Free State opted for US Army Command and Staff procedures, and US Tactical Doctrine, which in turn was based on the Prussian model. It adopted the Czechoslovak system of Physical Training and brought in a German Colonel as Head of the Army School of Music, to organise the Army bands on the German model. The pre-War Irish Army adopted the distinctive German Army helmet. Both the Army and Air Corps had green uniforms.

There are many ways to present a distinctive SDF brand. Getting the balance right between creating a separate identity, and retaining what is best from the British tradition, is the real challenge.

It might also be a positive move to show the people what the future SDF could look like, before they are asked to decide on the referendum.

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE- A LIFE LESS ORDINARY

The UK Armed Forces have always welcomed young men and women from the Republic into its ranks. In the possible event of Scottish Independence, it is probable that their doors will also be open for Scots to join up. This means that the SDF will find itself competing with the UK Armed Forces for recruits.

In present times, service in the IDF is an attractive option for young men and women, and every year there are thousands on the waiting list to apply, for perhaps 500 places. Nevertheless, many Irish citizens still join the UK Armed Forces; some are following family traditions, while others are attracted by the glamorous images of TV recruiting campaigns.

Foreign forces are prohibited by the Defence Act from conducting recruiting campaigns in the Republic. However, UK television stations are now available in every corner of Ireland, and British newspapers are available in Ireland at every local newsstand. Recruiting campaigns for the UK armed forces have used both television and print media very successfully. In addition, British television drama programmes often feature troops in action, as do news programmes.

Up to the mid-nineties the UK managed to project a more attractive image of their Armed Forces compared to the IDF. However, in a series of steps, the IDF managed to even up the competition. A major re-equipment programme upgraded substantially the Irish armour and transport fleets, warships, aircraft, communications, and weapons systems. New camouflage pattern combat uniforms, using a high standard ripstop material, projected a more professional image of the Irish soldier. The IDF began to use similar TV videos to project a glamorous view of all three services. The famous recruiting slogan, “*A life less ordinary*”, appealed to the spirit of adventure in young men and women with the opportunity of serving in Lebanon, Cyprus, Bosnia and Somalia. This slogan was adopted far and wide, including being taken up by the British Army recruiting campaigns!

The Scottish soldier in an independent Scotland will have very different conditions of service than his/her counterpart in the British Army today. First and foremost he/she will be stationed at home in Scotland, living in the community and participating in society. Tours of duty overseas will be shorter for the vast majority of personnel.

In Ireland, while a soldier can be transferred between posts, in practice he/she can choose to remain in the one post for their working life. However, if successful in a promotion competition, he/she may have to move for a period. This means that the Irish soldier can usually put down roots, buy a house, and have a family life. He or she can play a full part in the sporting and cultural life of the community.

What is the best minimum age of enlistment for a Scottish soldier/sailor/airman? The Irish soldier enlists at 18, two years older than his UK colleague. He will also more than likely have secondary education up to Leaving Cert (University entrance). After his initial 17 weeks recruit training, he/she will usually be given permission to live outside barracks. He/she will be 19 years of age when selected for the first overseas tour of duty, usually a 6 months tour. As the overseas allowances are generous, the soldier is able to buy a car, or put down a deposit on a house, or get married, on what he/she can set aside from a tour of duty.

The status of the Scottish soldier in society could be looked at. As a subject of the Monarch he/she cannot sue the Monarch. The Irish soldier is a citizen of the State, and can fully use the courts to protect himself. The State has a duty of care for the soldier. The duty of care of the State to the soldier has led to high standards of Health & Safety in the military workplace.

If he or she feels they has been wronged, and fail to get a satisfactory result from the military chain of command, he/she can appeal to the Minister for a Redress of Wrongs. He/she can also appeal to the Military Ombudsman. Moreover, he/she can go to a solicitor and seek redress through the civil courts. On pay and conditions they can also refer to their Representative Associations.

The introduction of Representative Associations into the Irish Defence Forces has been a success story. Initial fears that their presence would adversely affect discipline and operational efficiency have proven unfounded. Instead, with the RAs having access to the Minister and the General Staff, soldiers concerns on pay and conditions get priority attention. As a result, the soldier will get the best individual kit, uniforms and equipment available on the international market. The SDF would do well to look at the Irish system of military representation.

In smaller armies, promotion opportunities can be slow. In Ireland, promotion boards follow strict criteria, usually based on a balance of merit and seniority. The integrated two brigade option above will help to provide a better career structure for officers and senior NCOs, and give younger personnel a better chance of getting middle and higher management/leadership experience. Acting promotions to fill vacancies at home caused by personnel serving abroad has also helped.

GEOGRAPHICAL DEPLOYMENT

While naval and air assets might be better concentrated, in two bases for each service, I would suggest that the Army should have a good geographical spread, perhaps in 6 to 8 battalion sized posts, plus one major Training Centre and a logistics base for SDF (3rd Echelon) support.

In Ireland, a geographical spread has been achieved, mainly for historical and operational reasons, which also enhances recruitment. Over 90% of the population of the Republic live within reasonable daily commuting distance from a major Army post. This means that Irish soldiers can usually serve throughout their career in, or close to, their own regions. While transfers are often necessary for officers and senior NCOs to be promoted, or as a result of barracks closure, the vast majority of Irish soldiers can live and put down roots in a community. They are an integral part of the community. SDF planners should consider the Irish model when considering the geographical deployment of the SDF.

COSTS

In assessing the possible defence costs to Scotland of independence, two areas have to be considered; the projected *annual costs* of running the SDF, and what I would call the *set-up costs*.

As regards the *annual costs*, the UK has the highest defence budget in the EU, Ireland the lowest. Scotland, as part of the UK, is currently paying £3.3b (€4b) annually for its part in UK Defence. SIPRI figures for 2011 show a sample of defence expenditure, expressed as a percentage of GDP, for a number of NATO and neutral nations:

Ireland (0.6%), Belgium(1.1%), Sweden (1.3%), Denmark (1.4%), Finland (1.5%), Norway (1.5%), France(2.2%), and UK(2.6%). The projected rate for Ireland, in 2013, has been further reduced to 0.45%.

The question is, how much should an Independent Scotland pay for its defence?

The SNP proposal, described above as the *Continuity Option*, has been costed by them at £2.5b or 1.7% of (Scottish) GDP.

The Crawford/Marsh proposal, described above as the *Nordic Option*, presents an upper cost of £1.84b or 1.3% of GDP and a lower cost of £1.56b or 1.2% of GDP.

My own guesstimate, based on the *Irish Option*, is £1.40b or around 1.1%. The disparity in the three options needs comment. The *Continuity option* provides for a more robust defence in terms of ships aircraft and armour. The *Nordic option* reduces the defence profile more in line with current Nordic military assets. The *Irish option* calculates lower personnel costs (€44,000 per Irish soldier, as against £50,000 for UK soldier, where overseas accommodation is factored in), plus a slight reduction from the Nordic option in combat aircraft.

The main conclusion is that an Independent Scotland can reduce its defence spending by 40% to 60 %, depending on which option emerges as the best for Scotland.

A feature of the Irish system is the devolution of budgets to the military. This has allowed for more accurate financial decision making, as the military are best placed to assess the cost effectiveness of programmes. In 2012, excluding military and civilian pay (€463m), the military directly controlled approximately 60% of the balance. The non-devolved portion of the Defence Estimates includes the acquisition of capital items, such as ships and aircraft. The DOD Secretary General is the Accounting Officer of the Department.

The Scottish media have latched on to the costs implications of the independence proposal, particularly the setting-up costs for the SDF. This is a real problem for both sides in the debate. While it is possible to produce an estimate for annual costs, the setting-up costs are much more complicated to assess. The parameters of estimating these costs are so wide, that the end figure could be as low as a £1 billion or as high as £10 billion.

The key question is what can Scotland gain from the UK in its negotiations? For reasons of interoperability the SDF would be wise to stick as far as possible to UK equipment. Will the UK concede 10% of its defence assets as suggested? Perhaps as the UK armed forces are downsizing, additional tanks, ships, aircraft and other equipment can be handed over?

To what extent will the SDF need to purchase, or lease, items? To what extent can the SDF use cheaper non-military specifications? The transport fleet, soft skinned vehicles only, will be considerable, perhaps in the region of 4,000 vehicles. How many of these can be commercial vehicles, and how many need to have more expensive military versions? The Irish Army have successfully managed with non-military specification 4 x 4 patrol cars for its cash escorts. On the other hand, the Irish have paid top price to acquire the Mowag Armoured Personnel Carrier. The key question here is to provide the best protection and mobility for troops on the ground.

Would the SN be satisfied to be equipped with second-hand ships that have only a few years operational life left? Or will the SAF be prepared to take over obsolete aircraft?

What about holdings of ammunition? The choice has to be made as to what extent should the SDF comply with NATO guidelines on how much ammunition should be held in depots. Would enough to fight for 7 days or 28 days be sufficient?

Can the acquisition of the entire inventory be phased in over a number of years, and payments spread accordingly?

For systems that need to be acquired new on the international market, lead-in times should be identified, as delivery may be spread over many years. Leasing is an option that may be cost effective for some items.

The bottom line is that the start-up costs cannot be calculated until the inventory is complete, and the acquisition options researched and decided. However, to meet the political imperative, tables of cost projections could be estimated, based on assumptions, and on best and worst case scenarios.

Infrastructure costs should be easier to estimate once the full requirement in this area has been identified. While maximum use should be made of former posts, there will probably be a need to build additional posts. This will take time, so costs will be spread over a number of years.

To offset defence costs, Scotland could develop its own armaments industry, to meet its own requirements but mainly aimed at international markets. This has been done very successfully by small countries such as Switzerland, Austria and Sweden. Niche areas can be identified. Ireland lost the opportunity to develop such an industry due to political woolly thinking back in the 1970s. However, Irish companies have at least made an impact on the dual use market.

CONCLUSIONS

While the option of creating the SDF by taking over existing Scots units of the UK Armed Forces is obvious, it would be better in the long run for an independent Scotland to first identify its requirements having regard to the roles envisaged for the SDF. This does not exclude pragmatic options that may be compatible with the overall plan. The objective should be to *adapt existing units to fit the plan, rather than adapt the plan to fit existing units.*

The fear of losing many MoD jobs at, or associated with, Faslane, is a powerful argument in favour of a NO vote. However, the retention of a foreign military base in Scotland, such as Faslane, for a medium term period of, for example, ten years, is not incompatible with an independent Scotland. A ten year deadline would allow time for the UK to reorganise its nuclear deterrent outside Scotland. The future of Faslane should be part of a package covering all aspects of Scottish UK defence issues.

In Ireland two referenda (Nice 1 and Lisbon 1) were lost the first time they were presented to the people. Surprisingly, in both cases, military issues played a significant part in losing the referenda. The main lesson learned from both events is the paramount need to keep the public fully informed, and to encourage open and active debate. In Scotland there is much work to be done to provide the electorate the information they need to support the Scottish Defence Policy, and time is relatively short.

The decoupling of Scotland's involvement in UK's strategic operations, and the creation of the SDF, should favour the YES campaign. It will result in substantial financial savings, and still provide for Scottish Defence Forces, of which the Scots people can be proud.

So what are the chances of it all happening? At this stage (Summer, 2013) the YES campaigners are the underdogs, but they have momentum. When all the arguments have been made, the Referendum will be a real test of the Scots' sense of separate identity, and of their confidence to go it alone. However, if the Referendum fails to win majority support next year, the groundwork will have been done for a future run at the fence. Presenting a viable option on Scottish defence will form part of that groundwork.

Defence planners can learn much from the experiences of other small defence forces, including from the Irish. Scotland does not have to reinvent the wheel.

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