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Date
Subject Plan of action for the implementation of the Total Force Concept
"Sustainably ready and rapidly deployable"

CC

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*Please refer to the date, our
reference and subject when
replying.*

In my letters dated 8 April 2016 (Parliamentary Documents 34 300 X, no. 94 and 95) and during the general meeting of the House of Representatives of the States-General regarding reservist policy on 20 April 2016, I committed to providing this House with a plan of action for the implementation of the reservist policy. The motion tabled by the MPs Knops, Eijsink and Vuijk (Parliamentary Document 34 300 X, no. 121) and carried on 7 July 2016 also requests that I produce a proposal for the manner in which 'the Total Force Concept (TFC) can be implemented in the Netherlands armed forces'. As deployment of reservists is part of this concept, you hereby receive a plan of action that is an integrated approach to both subjects. Significant benefits are expected from implementation.

The Total Force Concept

Features and definition

Several countries have implemented the TFC in some form. You were informed about this in my letter on the international benchmark (Parliamentary Document 34 300 X, no. 69). There is not, however, a universal definition of the TFC, due to differences in culture, scope and composition. Nonetheless, all forms of the TFC have two features in common. Firstly, the TFC focuses on increasing the flexibility of the armed forces. Secondly, sustainable cooperation with other actors in society is the starting point. In this way, the deployability and sustainability of the armed forces is increased, as is public support.

This flexibilisation changes the structure and organisational management principles from 'having capabilities set up as standard, ready, and permanently available' to 'differentiation in readiness and having materiel and personnel capabilities available where and when needed'. Personnel and materiel reserve capability increases the ability to flexibly establish or re-establish points of main effort. It enables a better response to peak load and enables sustainability to be relatively quickly increased when and where necessary.

In the TFC, in-house, shared, hired and subcontracted capabilities are connected with each other and synchronised. This far-reaching integration brings with it greater interdependency. As such, the TFC goes further than simply adding an extra layer to the armed forces, the deployment of reservists, or a flexible workforce. In other words, it has an impact on the set-up and composition of the armed forces as a whole.

The Netherlands armed forces use the following definition and term for the TFC: the Adaptive Armed Forces. In the Adaptive Armed Forces, the potential (personnel and materiel) operational capability in Dutch society is sustainably organised with flexible, effect-based and effective integration for the purpose of the sustainment and deployment of the armed forces.

The importance of the TFC

Although the TFC is not an all-encompassing answer to all challenges facing the Defence organisation, it does offer important benefits to both the Defence organisation and other actors in society, including:

- possibilities for better and more quickly anticipating and responding to risks, threats and peak times;
- reserve capability that increases the deployability and sustainability of the armed forces;
- the effective and efficient provision of capabilities that do not need to be available constantly or that are very expensive to retain and maintain, such as IT and cyber capabilities, as well as medical, transportation and staff capabilities;
- the exchange of personnel, with the acquisition of broader experience as a result;
- greater embedding of the armed forces in society;
- closer links with the labour market, such that certain developments can be better responded to, such as flexibilisation and the drop in the number of young people on the labour market (due to the ageing population and the fact that young people are studying for longer and thus entering the labour market later).

Implementation

Points of departure for implementation

Many elements of the TFC are familiar to the Netherlands armed forces, for example, the Security and Proficiency training programme (*VeVa-opleiding*), the reservist capability, the Institute for Defence and Partnership Hospitals (*Instituut Defensie Relatieziekenhuizen*), the composition of the workforce of the Civil-Military Interaction Command (*Civiele en Militaire Interactiecommando*) and the Defence Security Organisation (*Defensie Bewaking en Beveiliging Organisatie*), outsourcing agreements entered into by Support Command and DMO, the outsourcing of ship, vehicle and aircraft management, and the Golden Triangle model of cooperation. The manner in which Paresto and the IT domain cooperates with the market is also in line with the concept.

In the Adaptive Armed Forces, however, these forms of cooperation will be more far-reaching than they have been. After all, they will be integrated and will

directly contribute to the operational capability. In order to be able to test new initiatives against the objectives of the concept, the Defence organisation will apply the following points of departure:

- timely availability of capabilities takes prevalence over owning these capabilities (materiel) or employing them permanently (personnel);
- enlargement and scalability of capabilities prevails over permanent, fixed capability;
- in addition to added value in the security domain, the initiative also has added value for society and the economy and therefore contributes to embedding the armed forces in society;
- the initiative promotes the responsiveness of the armed forces and therefore the sustainable readiness and deployability;
- the initiative promotes the efficacy and efficiency of the armed forces.

Overall management of implementation

The concept is comprehensive and demands a transformation in the way of thinking, working and operating. The increased dependency on external partners means that mutual trust must grow. In principle, the implementation of the concept is never complete. New forms of cooperation will constantly be sought. Various factors will impact the progress and pace of the implementation of the concept, such as the specific characteristics of the Defence elements, the variety of needs and the financial means available. Sufficient space will be given for decentral initiatives. That means that differences in progress per Defence element and per capability (combat and support units, training and staff capabilities, etc.) will be accepted.

The development is not, however, without obligation. It will therefore be directed centrally:

- the Secretary-General, on behalf of the Minister, is the commissioning authority, the Chief of Defence is the contractor and the Vice Chief of Defence is the programme leader;
- the Vice Chief of Defence will head up a steering group made up of the deputy commanders of the Defence elements. He will be supported by a sounding-board group of representatives from employers' and employees' organisations, among others.

Personnel

Building up operational flexibility in the Adaptive Armed Forces is also, and primarily, a personnel matter. Intensifying the reservist policy and cooperating with external parties should result in flexible labour potential. The composition of the workforce will change, but that will take time. The initiative expressly will not result in the displacement of incumbent personnel.

The labour potential can differ according to Defence element, functional area and capability. In this way throughflow will not be limited to Defence only. There will be greater focus on open interaction with civilian partners, with opportunities being extended for increasing employability via external work experience and to attract and retain external knowledge and competences. An increase in the variety of employment contracts and individual arrangements is the result. More active use will also be made of the flow of employees back and forth (temporary outflow to a civilian employer, followed by return to Defence as regular military personnel, reservist or civilian personnel), horizontal inflow, reservists and shared

employership. The proportion of reservists and temporary contractors (in total) will increase, not as an additional layer to existing units, but as an integral part of these units. The composition that works best, both for the armed forces and civilian partners, should emerge step-by-step.

Financial resources

The financial consequences of the implementation are dependent on the initiatives taken and the pace at which they are put into practice. Insight should grow throughout the process. Not all initiatives require extra budget. It should be noted that the greater the extent to which the initiative impacts Defence's core task, the greater the need for securities to be built-in and the greater the costs. For example, the compensation paid to a civilian employer or personnel will be proportionate to the requirements set for guaranteed and rapid availability, deployment time and the level of danger. It goes without saying that implementing the concept is partly dependent on the available resources within the current financial framework and any additional funds that can be reserved in the context of the multi-year perspective.

Measures and actions

The realisation of the Adaptive Armed Forces will be a growth process. It must be clear that the concept is not an aim in itself, but a means to reinforce the armed forces. As such, there is also space to adapt the realisation as necessary, on the basis of experiences and new developments. It goes without saying that Defence nonetheless strives for more flexibly deployable personnel and structural cooperative constructions with external partners in order to reinforce materiel and personnel readiness. Over the next few years, the following measures will therefore be worked on:

2017

- As of the start of 2017, internal and external communication will start via the relevant channels available to Defence, such as the Intranet, the *Defensiekrant* ('Defence News' newspaper) and social media.
- Discussions will be held with the union federations for government personnel in the first quarter.
- Organisational changes will be tested against the points of departure mentioned previously.
- The programme management will be set up during the first quarter.
- Under the direction of the steering group, external employer engagement will be professionalised and restructured. Existing forums such as the Defence-Business Platform (*Platform Defensie Bedrijfsleven*), the Employer Support consultation body (*Overlegorgaan Employer Support*) and the Armed Forces Reservist consultation body (*Reservisten Overleg Krijgsmacht*) will be better coordinated.
- External contractors and reservist capability will be positioned in each part of the Defence organisation (as of the second half of 2017).
- In the second quarter, a conference will be organised with employers and employees' organisations to explore the willingness and possibilities with regard to (long-term) shared use of materiel and services and with regard to shared employership (employer support).

- Guidelines for routinely approaching outgoing military personnel with regard to taking on the status of reservist were drawn up in 2016. In future, all outgoing military personnel will be approached with regard to remaining part of Defence as a reservist. If the serviceman or woman in question is willing and suited to the position, and depending on the organisational needs, he or she will in principle be positioned in shadow positions in his or her former unit.
- Defence elements will start with one or more projects to integrate and sustainably shape cooperation with external partners in relation to combat power, personnel, materiel and services.
- The concept of flow back and forth (temporary outflow) will be added to the concept of inflow-throughflow-outflow.
- New contract types for the deployment of personnel will be developed, in cooperation with other employers as necessary. These will provide an answer to the problems experienced by reservists.
- It will be investigated under which conditions the speed and integration of the deployment of self-employed entrepreneurs without personnel as reservists or temporary contractors can be improved.
- The concept 'shared ownership of materiel (and innovative contracts)' will be developed further.
- Consequences for legislation and regulations with regard to calls for tenders and procurement will also be further detailed, where necessary in cooperation with other ministries.
- It will be determined which Defence capabilities can be reinforced, whereby the extent of integration will be defined per functionality with regard to fixed in-house military capabilities, flexibly deployable capabilities, ad hoc deployable civilian capabilities and strategic alliances. One example of this construction is the Institute for Defence Partnership Hospitals, which safeguards the surgical functionality together with civilian hospitals, by means of permanent and flexible military and civilian capabilities.
- The possibility of scaling up the personnel capability as necessary and, if possible, scaling down again, will be improved from 2017 onwards by integrating the reservist capabilities in the staffs and extending the contracting possibilities.
- The cooperation with regional training centres (ROCs) will be extended and cooperation will be launched at higher professional education (HBO) and university level.
- A method will be developed for objectively monitoring the growth of the deployment of external contractors and reservists and cooperation with the market.
- The financial consequences for the allocation and accountability of the budgets will be further detailed.

2018

- It will be investigated if, and to what extent, changes to legislation and regulations will be necessary to guarantee the availability of personnel and materiel where rapid deployment is required.
- Where vacancies cannot be filled by regular military personnel, attempts will be made to fill the positions with one or more reservists.

- The reservist inflow will be substantially increased, both through the inflow of former military personnel as through the horizontal inflow of external candidates without previous military experience.
- Risks will be identified and mitigated regarding the guaranteed availability of capabilities, procurement and integrity.
- A communication programme will be set up with public and private partner organisations that promotes the embedding of the armed forces in society.
- Additional sustainability will be created together with organisations where reservists work or with which personnel are shared.
- A start will be made on the implementation of the concept in the materiel supply and logistics chains.
- A start will be made on the implementation of the concept in training programmes and courses.

2019

- By no later than mid-2019 it will be clear whether additional statutory measures will be needed in order to realise the guaranteed deployability.
- Each Defence element will have contracts with external parties regarding the availability of personnel, services and materiel. In addition, measures will be taken, where possible on the basis of on-call contracts, to make it simpler to decentrally hire external capabilities and share them with one another.
- New contract types for personnel deployment will be applied to all Defence elements.
- All positions, including combat positions, will in principle be open to reservists.
- Arrangements will be made to make it possible to easily change between the status of regular military, part-time, full-time, reservist and civilian employee. HR instruments and systems will be amended to accommodate this.
- Agreements will have been made with external partners regarding the temporary (up to several years) employment of Defence personnel and the exchange of personnel for the purpose of gaining knowledge and experience.

2020

- In comparison to 2016, the Defence workforce will have a substantially larger proportion of flexible capabilities.
- The materiel and personnel capability in all Defence elements will have increased in line with the points of departure.
- The concept will have been implemented in the materiel supply and logistics chains.
- The concept will have been implemented in all training capabilities.
- Regional and national cooperation, both with the business community, and knowledge institutes and centres of expertise will have been realised.
- The implementation will be evaluated.

2020 onwards

- The follow-up will depend on the findings so far.

Conclusion

Representatives from all Defence elements were involved in compiling this plan of action. In addition, use was made of the knowledge of external national partners, such as the Netherlands Organisation of Applied Scientific Research (TNO) and the Dutch Federation of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (*MKB Nederland*), as well as international partners, such as Germany and Canada. Known bottlenecks in the implementation of the reservist policy, the experiences of reservist pilots and the international benchmark have also been incorporated in this plan.

By implementing the measures and actions, in combination with robust programme management, Defence is taking a targeted approach to the transition towards Adaptive Armed Forces. This plan of action is not a blueprint. It describes the direction Defence will take. In doing so, it will be entering uncharted territory. It is highly likely that in practice plans will have to be adapted in line with experiences and evolving insight. I will therefore report annually on the progress made and, where possible, make measures concrete.

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Netherlands Minister of Defence