

**DOCTORAL COUNCIL OF
MIKLÓS ZRÍNYI UNIVERSITY OF
NATIONAL DEFENSE**

Colonel (Eng.) András KLADEK (Retired)

Voluntary Reservist System and Employer Support Program

Author's summary of Ph.D. thesis

Scientific consultant:
Dr. Lajos Szigeti Ph.D.
Associate University Professor

Budapest, 2007.

1. Identification of the scientific problem

In peacetime the compulsory military service ceased in Hungary. The fast increase in military force for the tasks of collective defense, prevention of conflicts, and crisis management is only viable by using trained voluntary contracted persons who are suitable for the military service, i.e. voluntary reservists.

The voluntary military force has already been in operation since three years. The initial period of changes full of tensions elapsed, it is already due that the voluntary reservist system will be re-introduced after completion of the required reforms and preparations for which I make proposals base on my research work.

The voluntary reservist service can only be implemented by the Defense Forces and it can be assumed by the individual with certainty if also the employers can bear the temporary absence associated with training and are willing to and can replace the reservist when he or she is called up. In the NATO member states using voluntary reservists this function is fulfilled by the employer support programs.

With my research I intend to substantiate working out an Employer Support Program that is acceptable and can be financed under the circumstances existing in Hungary. I propose such a program that provides legal guarantee for retaining the voluntary reservist's workplace and sufficiently compensates the employer for the working time lost, institutionalizes the representation and reconciliation of interests between the interested parties and promotes the employer's understanding with respect to the employee who attested voluntary reservist service.

2. Research objectives

- I analyze the principles that are followed in most of the NATO member states as far as the use of voluntary reservists and the operation of the employer support program are concerned and which can serve as a model for us.
- I demonstrate the introduction in Hungary of the voluntary reservist system and also the fact what situation was caused by the lack of the employer support program. I prove the necessity of wider application of the voluntary reservist system and make proposal for the changes that are vital in terms of also the employers' interests be observed in the course of planning and organizing the training and their effective application.
- I analyze how the voluntary reservist system is backed by the society and what the relation of players of the economic life with the voluntary reservist service is like, moreover what toolkit the businesses would consider to be necessary and sufficient for compensation of the working time lost due to the joining up.
- Based on the analysis I make a proposal for the employer support program that can be financed under the circumstances existing in Hungary.

3. Research methods

I used and processed my experience gained in the course of making preparations for introduction of and establishing the voluntary reservist system, as well as those gained in the course of my work carried out in the NATO National Reserve Forces Committee (NRFC).

I studied the literature associated with this subject. Due to the novelty of this subject, the relevant Hungarian technical literature items are available in small numbers only and

objective descriptions of the relevant practice of the NATO member states can even be found with difficulty.

I also consulted economic and legal professionals.

For the examination of several issues I used the comparative method, first of all when the practice of the NATO member states was studied.

I examined the employers' attitude towards the defense in the form of telephone interviews relating to nearly five hundred Hungarian business entities.

I have also performed the secondary analysis of relevant researches of the Strategic Defense Research Institute of Miklós Zrínyi University of National Defense (ZMNE).

4. Summarizing description by chapters of the examinations performed

In Chapter 1, I demonstrate the methods of organizing of reserve forces both in defense forces based on compulsory military service and in voluntary defense forces. I analyze the principles that are followed in most of the NATO member states as far as the use of voluntary reservists is concerned and which can serve as a model for us.

I give the reasons for the necessity of establishing the employer support system and present the program of several member states that are marching at the head as far as the application of the voluntary reservists and the employer support are concerned.

In Chapter 2, I analyze the steps of introduction in Hungary of the voluntary reservist system and the reasons why the voluntary reservist system was not successful. Among these, it is first ranked that we had no employer support program and it has not yet been established despite the relevant Government Decree.

I outline the crisis situations for the solution of which the resources of the peace organization would not be sufficient and prove that in such cases voluntary reservists are required.

I present an overview of the effective regulations associated with training and application of voluntary reservists and make proposals for the changes that enable the employers' interests to be observed in the course of planning and organizing the training and their effective application.

In Chapter 3, I describe the results of research conducted in terms of how the voluntary reservist system is backed by the society and the relation of players of economic life with respect to the voluntary reservist service.

In Chapter 4, I outline and give the reasons for the employer support program elaborated by me that is underpinned by the following four pillars: the protection assured by the law, the compensation for the lost working time; the representation and reconciliation of interests, as well as convincing, support, and recognition of the employers.

Finally, I summarize the conclusions of my thesis, the new scientific results, and make a proposal for utilization of the thesis, as well as for additional areas and tasks of research.

5. Summarized conclusions

In the military forces of the NATO member states, the role of the reservists in the national defense and more and more increasingly also in the peace keeping operations has been appreciating since the end of the cold war as a result of the staff reductions. In several countries, the compulsory military service has been suspended in the course of transformation into the voluntary defense force, but simultaneously, the trained reservists are reckoned with

everywhere. Voluntary reservists are applied (or are planned to be applied) also in the countries where the institution of the compulsory military service was retained.

From the viewpoint of resources, the properly operating voluntary reservist system is cost effective, fits the circumstances of the market economy well since the reservist is taken out from the civilian workplace for the period of time only when the application of the formation is planned. Such the expenses spent on them constitute only a fragment of maintaining such a permanent staff. This is well proven by the fact that almost the half of the capabilities of the U.S. defense forces is assured by voluntary reservists from less than the one tenth of the defense force budget.

In peacetime the compulsory military service ceased in Hungary. The fast increase in military force with a greater number of staff for the tasks of collective defense, prevention of conflicts, and crisis management is only viable by calling up voluntary reservists. The legal background for this is already available and the organizational framework can be established in a way proportionate to the value because of the financial and other advantages of operation of the voluntary reservist system.

In Hungary, such a system is to be established that enables the reservists to assume a post in a readiness category that fits his or her workplace and private life. The priorities between the military and the civilian career may change time by time. Occasionally, the promotion in the workplace may become more important than the military training status but therefore a trained reservist ought not to be lost but he or she could be re-classified into a lower category of readiness. For this, the range of service forms that can be assumed ought to be widened.

The general purpose of the employer support program is to win the employer for the sake of the case of national defense, and its concrete purpose is to make more acceptable for the employers the more frequent absence of the employee assuming voluntary reservist service.

The employer support program of the United States and Canada is based on enviable grounds, laws and being abided by the laws, the patriotic commitment of the citizens and the players of economic life, the employer's recognition and support and the possible grievances are treated by a properly established organization for representation of interests and all these provide enough protection for the reservists there.

The program operating in the United Kingdom is more rational than the former. It also uses the elements applied by the United States and Canada but makes more: it reduces the employers' losses associated with the reservist service within a proper framework or compensates the employers for such losses.

Belgium, France, and Spain launched to elaborate an employer support program for which they consider that mostly the elements well-proven in the United Kingdom serve as a model.

Under Hungarian circumstances an employer support program may be successful only if we fully compensate the employers for their losses associated with calling up of its employee, protect the reservist with the provisions of the law from the unjustified loss of his or her workplace, implement the reconciliation of interests between an among the employers, the employees and the defense forces, as well as recognize and back those employers who are active parties to strengthening the national defense.

From the viewpoint of assuming voluntary reservist service it is a necessary but not sufficient condition is to guarantee with provisions of law for the party contracting to do so that he or she will suffer no discrimination due to his or her calling up because the provisions of the law provide him or her with protection against the "employer's tyranny."

For those who consider more expedient to take ordinary paid or unpaid leave for the duration of the reservist service in order to keep their workplace, giving such permission ought to be assured by the law.

In the law it ought to be expressed that the possible protection of the working time base, as well as application of solutions saving the working time when scheduling and implementing military training are obligatory for the defense forces.

The extent of the financial compensation, as well as the system of its calculation and granting are of key importance. The solution that satisfies the majority could be most expediently achieved through conducting institutionalized, regular negotiations between the Ministry of Defense and the employers' organizations with the involvement of the trade chambers. As a result of the negotiations the (billable) costs incurring in connection with calling up of the reservist employee can be put into a proper framework and a compensation mechanism can be worked out by using of which the wearisome itemized cost accounting can be avoided.

The representation and reconciliation of interests are important elements of the employer support program the expedient forum of which is the Employer Support Committee that — as a civil society organization — would operate with the participation of the members of organizations representing the employers' interests and the trade chambers, the representatives of the Ministry of Defense and military headquarters, the elected representatives of the voluntary reservists, as well as the alliance of the reservists. The operation of the committee is important from the viewpoint of settlement of the potentially emerging conflicts of interests, as well as from development of tools for the compensation of the employers.

With employment of a voluntary reservist the employer assumes both sacrifice and risk that should also be honored with recognition of non-material nature granted to them in addition to the compensation of the working time lost.

Such an employer support program that would provide a perfect protection to the employee under all types of circumstances operates nowhere. In addition to the employer support program, it is therefore required to conduct preliminary negotiations and to reach an agreement between the employee that makes preparations for assuming a voluntary reservist service and his or her employer.

6. Recommendations and proposals

I propose that the Ministry of Defense should as soon as possible — still before the defense solidarity would decrease — launch working out the voluntary reservist employer support program taking into consideration the principles elaborated by me.

The elements of the employer support program constitute a coherent system, the work aiming at its elaboration needs that several professions (legal, economic, HR, communication, training, etc. professionals) be represented and they work together. This is the reason why I propose to carry out the work in the form of a project.

Moreover I propose to the Ministry of Defense the following:

- to launch working out the training requirements of the voluntary reservists;
- to conduct a comprehensive HR analysis for the application of voluntary reservists;
- to organize an internal communication campaign for demonstration of advantages of the voluntary reservist system;

- to cause to conduct a survey associated with the toolkit of financial compensation to employers;
- to order a survey among the residents and the actual defense personnel in terms of willingness to assume the service.

I propose that the Ministry of defense should launch the reform of the voluntary reservist system based on the elements included in this thesis and should start to recruit, register, and train the voluntary reservists in compliance with the operation status of elements of the employer support program.

7. The new scientific results

- I have performed the analysis and evaluation of status of introduction in Hungary of the voluntary reservist system and drawn conclusions in terms of the errors committed and made proposal for the reform of the system. I have proven that the fully voluntary defense force requires voluntary reservists in the course of the collective defense, the prevention of conflicts, and crisis management the application of whom is cost effective from the viewpoint of human resources.
- I have proven that the voluntary reservist service cannot be operated without any employer support program and evaluated the employer support programs of several NATO member states that are marching at the head in terms of operation of the employer support program.
- I have performed the survey of relation associated with the voluntary reservist service and the employer support program of the citizens, the contracted soldiers, and the players of the economic life and drawn conclusions from the analysis thereof in terms of implementation of the program.
- I have worked out alternatives for the employer support program, as well as for the details thereof that are the following: the protection assured by the law, the financial compensation granted to employers; the operation framework of the Employer Support Committee, as well as the various forms of recognition and support granted to the employers.

8. Applicability in the practice of the research results

Several elements of my thesis can be used in the education either in part or in full (organization of reserve forces, reservist systems with compulsory military service, voluntary reservist systems, demonstration of reservist system and employer support program of particular NATO member states) in the Miklós Zrínyi University of National Defense.

The analysis of the errors committed in the course of introduction in Hungary of the voluntary reservist service, the conclusions drawn from the survey conducted among the employers, as well as the proposals based on them can be utilized for the reform to the required extent of the voluntary reservist system, moreover for substantiation of working out the employer support program.

Done in Budapest, on August 13, 2007

Colonel (Eng.) András KLADEK (Retired)