

**DEFENCE CONTRIBUTION:  
TERRITORIAL ARMY UNIT**

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**Lodged au Greffe on 9th September 1997  
by Deputy T.J. Le Main of St. Helier**

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**STATES OF JERSEY**

**STATES GREFFE**

## PROPOSITION

**THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion -**

to refer to their Act dated 28th January 1986, in which they decided that the Island should make a voluntary contribution to the defence expenditure of the United Kingdom, and to their Act dated 8th December 1987, in which they agreed to implement their decision of 14th February 1987 by agreeing to the establishment in the Island of a Territorial Army Royal Engineer Field Squadron; and to request the Defence Committee to present to the States no later than 31st January 1998 a report -

- (i) setting out the year by year cost of that contribution, such report to include the cost of accommodating the various personnel who, from time to time, have been associated with the unit; and -
- (ii) stating the manpower levels of the unit year on year since its inception, together with a comparison of how this relates to projected manning/recruitment levels when the proposition was adopted; and
- (iii) including, if possible, a report from the appropriate United Kingdom authorities on the unit's contribution to the United Kingdom's defence to date, together with an assessment of its future value in the light of possible changes of emphasis arising from the recent change of government and from the changing nature of the role of the military, following the collapse of the Soviet bloc; and
- (iv) stating the instances in which the unit has rendered assistance to the Island in times of civil emergency.

**DEPUTY T. J. LE MAIN OF ST. HELIER**

## Report

It may assist the House, the composition of which has changed substantially during the last 13 years, if I outlined briefly the sequence of events which led to the Island's defence contribution to the United Kingdom taking the form it does today.

By letter dated 4th June 1984, the Lieutenant Governor of the day conveyed to the then Bailiff a formal invitation from the Home Secretary to the Island authorities to consider whether it would be reasonable and practicable for the Island to make a regular annual contribution towards the costs of the defence expenditure of the United Kingdom, and of international representation by the United Kingdom on the Island's behalf.

This proposition does not concern itself with the question of the cost of international representation.

On 31st July 1984, the States agreed to constitute a Special Committee -

- (i) to consider the matter; and
- (ii) to consider alternative ways in which the Island could assist towards those costs.

That Special Committee's first report was presented to the States on 5th November 1985, and its lengthy content and appendices led it to recommend what, for the sake of brevity, can be called the 'minesweeper' option, which involved the setting up of a Royal Naval Reserve Unit, together with a minesweeper, the full costs of which would be borne by the Island.

On 28th January 1986, the States agreed that the Island should make a voluntary contribution to the United Kingdom's defence expenditure, and that the Special Committee should enter into detailed discussions with the United Kingdom authorities regarding the feasibility of the 'minesweeper' option, and report back to the Assembly.

Crucially, the Special Committee also undertook to look further into a suggestion that other options, including a search and rescue helicopter unit, should be considered, along with any other suggestions which might be put forward.

In its report presented to the States on 20th May 1986, the Special Committee reviewed the options it had considered, including the establishment of a 'land force contribution'. The Special Committee's conclusion, made in its expressed belief that the House had all the information needed to make a decision, was that it still recommended the 'minesweeper' option.

A full debate on this (and the previous) report was held by the States on 24th June and 1st July 1986 and the Special Committee went away once more - as it said in its third report lodged "au Greffe" on 11th November 1986 - to "consider the questions raised and views expressed during that debate".

In its conclusions, the Special Committee said that over a period of more than two years, all the options put forward had been examined, and it added that it was "firmly of the opinion that the time has come when a decision must be taken".

The debate was scheduled to take place on 9th December 1986 but, on 25th November 1986, Deputy D.A. Carter of St. Helier lodged "au Greffe" a proposition asking the States to approve the establishment of a Territorial Army unit as the Island's defence contribution.

A number of references were made - notably in the addendum to the Special Committee's third report to the States, and in the report which accompanied Deputy Carter's proposition to a 10 year period, and specifically in paragraph 12 of the Special Committee's third report, which stated that the effect of the proposals would be to make an offer to Her Majesty's Government conditional to the expense involved being limited over a ten-year period to a total of £16 million, plus inflation .....

Deputy Carter's explanatory note made much the same point, with a reference to the formation of a Territorial Army Unit "at a ten-year cost" to the Island of some £6.5 million.

It is fair to say that until Deputy Carter formally lodged his proposition, much of the debate had centred on the issue of a minesweeper or a helicopter, although it was clear during the lengthy public discussion during 1986 that there was a measure of support for a land based unit.

But Deputy Carter's proposition to authorise detailed discussions with the United Kingdom authorities about the establishment of a Territorial Army Unit was approved by the House, and following those discussions, the States approved a Defence Committee proposition on 8th December 1987 and agreed to the establishment in the Island of a Territorial Army Royal Engineer Field Squadron.

Almost 10 years have elapsed since that decision. This proposition is based on the assumption that at some time in the near future the States will be asked by the Defence Committee to carry out a 10-year review of its decisions.

It is crucial, both to the debate and to the need to avoid the prolonged wrangling which so often bedevilled reasoned and informed discussions on the issue during the years until the final decision was taken, that States members should be in possession of as much information as possible.

My proposition is simple. It calls on the Defence Committee to present a report to this House on what has happened since 8th December 1987, when this Assembly agreed to the formation of the Territorial Army Unit.

As the proposition indicates, the Defence Committee should be asked to report in detail on issues such as the total cost to the Island since the unit's creation, the numbers of units of accommodation which, at various stages, have been allocated to unit personnel and associated staff, the level of recruitment, and whether or not the projected figures of between 100 and 130 men and women have been sustained, or even achieved.

The report should also include an assessment from the appropriate authorities in the United Kingdom of the unit's value as a contribution to the United Kingdom's defence costs, and an assessment also of its future value in the light of the many changes which have taken place

internationally and in domestic terms since the States decision of December 1987.

Those changes include the recent change of government in the United Kingdom, and possible policy changes in respect of that country's defence, and the continuing debate about the role of the military which virtually every country in the world - and certainly all those within NATO and the former Warsaw Pact - has had since the collapse of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe.

The Defence Committee should also be prepared to indicate when it presents its report whether it intends to seek the approval of the States to continue with the present method of contributing to the United Kingdom's defence costs, or otherwise.