

21 Sept 2017.

Commission on the Future of Policing,

2nd Floor, St Stephens Green,

Earlsfort Terrace,

Dublin D02 PH42

Some thoughts regarding an Garda Siochana.

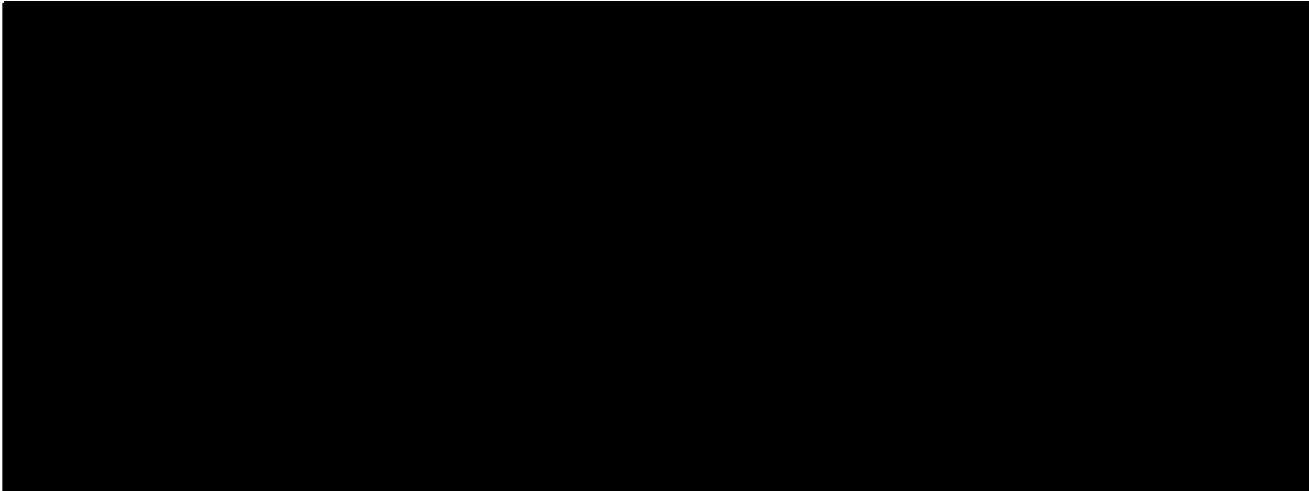
Dear Madam / Sir,

My Background



2.

General.



Without labouring this epistle could I set out in bullet points where I see a huge need for consideration in a 'new Garda Force' going forward, which is financed; equipped; trained; resourced and led in a professional manner by the Police Force itself and by Civilian professionals of other policing roles and also those of military background.

1. *The entire legislation pertaining to our national police force needs to reflect the challenge and realisable objectives of the Force, and the mission of this new Police Force. There is in my view a strong case to be made for legislation similar to the Permanent Defence Forces. It should NOT be possible for a Police Force in this, or any country, to have the facility of strike action or withdrawal of their labour.*
2. *This legislation must enshrine accountability; functional structures of command and control and a process of investigation and disciplinary procedures which reflect current values. How often has one heard in Ireland that 'white collar crime pays' with no one losing their jobs; no one being suspended; no one going to jail.....life just keeps going on as before, with no one taking responsibility, and culpability shelved in a very expensively produced file. This is Not the case in the Defence Forces, at least the Defence Force that I knew.*
3. *The training process of all levels of rank needs a complete reflection, and comparison with other similar organisations made to provide substantial education to all ranks and for their responsibilities in their respective ranks and appointments. The Permanent Defence Forces training structures could well provide guidance and maybe imitation. It is almost 28 years since I hung up my Sam Brown, but I can still reflect on the almost constant ongoing training.....then it was 16 / 18 weeks to initially train a recruit; then there was further training and further tests to get him / her to 3* private level; then up to almost 16 / 18 weeks on a Potential NCO Course for promotion to Corporal, who commands ten soldiers; then there will be further courses; further training and assessment before this Corporal is considered suitable for Promotion to Sergeant, where he / she face Senior NCO course of up to 3 months duration in addition to other pertinent courses*

3.

4. *Then of course you have the initial officer training of circa 2 years, and the ongoing officer training/courses as one progresses to higher ranks. You also have overseas courses for officers.*
5. *All courses, at both Private; NCO and Officer levels are full time and in many occasions are residential which necessitates living away from home for up to 12 months for some courses.*

To Arm or Not to Arm ?

6. ***The notion of an unarmed police force in this day and age defies logic for me, and lessons must be learned from other police forces to the challenges posed by criminals; thugs and terrorists. The Force must learn from the experience of other Police Forces worldwide.***

It is my view that the general public would warm to a highly trained and professional armed police force.

7. *Members of the Police must be trained and equipped to deal with all threats to defend their own lives; the lives of their colleagues, and the lives of the public. I accept that this change would necessitate huge logistical planning, in addition to training for control of weapons and ammunition throughout the country. I also accept that this encompasses a huge culture change.*
8. ***I would not have any difficulty with an enhanced role [armed] with the Defence Forces to joint operate with their police colleagues in particular operations provided that all structures of these groupings would be pre-determined; pre-trained; pre-organised; pre-planned; pre – armed and pre -equipped to deal with potential situations detrimental to the security of the State or its servants. The days of ‘ad hoc, turn-up-on-the-day’ must be eliminated for ever.***
9. ***At the end of the day these state security / policing institutions can only function to their expected optimum if the political will is there to fund and fully support them***

I wish you all well as there is a huge hill to climb to get even a half functional Police Force up and running from where it is now.

Those who are in positions of responsibility in the current Police Force must fully accept blame, and should be disciplined accordingly by the Government for their failure to perform to the standards expected of them under the terms of their contracts.

I would change the name of the organisation to Garda Naisiunta na hEireann ?? ...new structure; new rules; new personnel; new functions; new focus.

Unarmed Garda Siochana is well past its sell by date, and having said that, it served us well from the 20s to the 80s.

