

WHAT IF THEY GAVE A WAR AND NOBODY CAME

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I am very concerned about the experiment we began in 1972 when the draft ended. Since that time, the Army has been trying to make the All-Volunteer Force work. I don't fault the Army for trying. That is its nature. Congress makes a decision on what kind of Army we will have and how the manpower will be provided. The Army's reaction, as it should be, is to salute, do an about-face and set off to do the job with the tools they have been given.

The trouble is, our Army doesn't know how to admit defeat. When the decision of the politicians is wrong and the Army just hasn't been given the tools to do the job, the Army is

unable to come back and say to the President and the Congress

- "it can't be done." Like the good soldiers they are, they just keep trying harder!

What the Army was told in 1972 was that they had to get all their personnel through recruiting and that these personnel had to flesh out a 24 division force. What's more, they were told that the Army had to be not only an All-Volunteer Force but a Total Force. This meant that a heavy percentage of its deployable combat and support units had to be Reserve Forces. The reason for this was that even the politicians recognized that the costs of maintaining a totally active force of the size we might need would be enormous. The Reserves cost less, so with their help a smaller active force could be maintained.

We find now that Reserves comprise 54 percent of the Army's land combat forces, 57 percent of its special forces, 65 percent of the Army Combat Engineer Battallions and 65 percent of the tactical support units.

It is obvious from this structure that our war planning had to be entirely different from what it ever was before. Now the Reserve units have to be ready to deploy right with the active units. No longer can we count on the Active forces to go to war for a while and give us time to get the reserves ready.

Additionally, the Reserves are expected to "round out" the shortages in certain active units. Not only does this make the Selected Reserve a critical component, but brings the Individual

Ready Reserve closer to the mobilization day.

The first obvious failure we have seen is that we can't even fill the active force. We are currently 80,000 short. This doesn't sound so bad until you realize it hides much more severe problems. The educational level of the people we are taking in creates morale and efficiency problems. The statistics on retraining and training failures are frightening when we think about the increasingly sophisticated equipment these people must handle. The recruiting figures continue to decline, and show promise of becoming even more alarming with the declining national manpower pool of 18 year-olds in the years to come.

The active force recruitment has remained manageable, if

only barely, and with the disturbing situation I have just outlined.

The Reserve situation, on the other hand, is a disaster.

Reserve units need 276,000 personnel, and only have 185,000.

National Guard units need 428,000 members and have only 354,000.

The Individual Ready Reserve is nearly 500,000 short, and no one knows just how short because no one really knows where many of these people are.

Recruiting, while difficult and expensive for the active force, is infinitely harder for the Reserves. It has become such a burden on Reserve commanders that they can't adequately run their units because they have to spend so much time on recruiting efforts.

Retention problems show the results of the recruiting

problems and the quality of people being taken in. Over 40 percent of active duty recruits don't complete their first enlistment and the figures are comparable for the Reserve.

Political expediency tempted the politicians to announce the end of induction authority for the Selective Service in 1972 and registration in 1975. The system was put in what was called Deep Standby. The unsupported reason for this was that any future conflict with a major enemy would surely be a very short, intense war, with no time or need to mobilize and call up the citizenry to defend the country. I tell you that this kind of thinking is the very thing that could convince the Soviets that we are not ready to fight anything but an all-out nuclear war and it may prove a great temptation to them to engage in a

drawn out conventional war. This alternative may be even more attractive to them when they can gain the political advantage of announcing that they would not be the first to resort to nuclear weapons.

The shocking fact is that if we need to mobilize for a war it will be approximately seven months before the first person brought in by our "Deep Standby" Selective Service will be ready to fight. With the intensity of even conventional modern warfare, with the shortages in the strengths of our active and Reserve forces and with the questionable readiness of the forces we now have seven months is too long to wait. There may not be any units for these people to join up with if they don't get there before that.

These matters have been neglected far too long. We must

try to figure out how to get those tools.

On May 18 of this year, the Association of the United States Army provided a very valuable service when it presented a fine paper, on the need for a viable Selective Service System, to the President's Reorganization Project group. That statement deserves the support of all of us.

We began today in the Senate Armed Services Committee, of which I am a member, a series of hearings. The objective is to to and outline some possible alternatives for attacking the quality and quantity problems of our active and Reserve forces.

I want to read to you a statement I made this morning to the Subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel of our Armed Services Committee.

"I want to thank you for the opportunity to discuss the vital issues being reviewed by your Committee today. Congressman Beard has done our nation a service by studying and evaluating the strenghts and weaknesses of the U.S. Army. I applaud and support your willingness to create a forum of debate on the subject of conventional forces of which our Army is the major anchor. Congressman Beard's report clearly documents a series of major deficiencies in the total Army, but there is one major problem that interests me greatly; this problem is our weak ability to mobilize the armed forces. The Army reserve needs to be strengthened and most importantly the role of the Selective Service System needs to be revised and strengthened.

"I am appalled and disappointed to find that the Selective Service System no longer registers our young men. Consequently,

it could take as long as three to five months following mobilization before the military forces of the United States could begin training the manpower it will need and an additional three months before they begin serving. Stated simply, we do not know where American youths are and we no longer have the practical machinery to induct personnel in the event of mobilization.

"I know that you are very concerned about the issue of registration, in fact the FY 79 Authorization Report No. 95-826 requests that the Department of Defense should study a method for the examination, registration, and classification of young men and women and report to the Congress by December 31, 1978.

"I want to build on this recommendation by stating that we should not wait for another study. I plan to introduce an amendment to the FY 1979 appropriation bill with the following

provisions:

- A. Reinstitute and reconstitute a portion of the

Selective Service System at the state level.
- B. Register each individual and provide a lottery

number for each person. Also assess the costs

to provide mental and physical testing for

registrants.
- C. Specifically limit all Selective Service processes

to the preparation for national emergency and wartime

mobilization.

This proposal can reduce three to five months of lost time

in the event of a national mobilization and could mean the

difference between victory or defeat in some military scenarios.

Furthermore, the costs of such a program are modest since the Selective Service System will not be fully operable but will provide a foundation for immediate support to our military forces in the event of war.

When the volunteer force was formed in 1972 it was intended as a peacetime force. We must recognize that in the event of a war the time to rebuild a Selective Service System may not exist. The nature of modern warfare will create a demand for rapid response in finding manpower, and my proposal meets that requirement.

"We still live in a hostile world with a variety of enemies and everyday we are faced with new tensions in Africa, the Middle East and other parts of the world.

"Our peacetime force must be strengthened by a number of means which can signal our resolve to those who oppose the United States. One important ingredient in our resolve is the Commitment of political will through the willingness of our populace to serve their country. Registration of our young citizens signals to these young people that they still retain a commitment to their government should a national emergency arise. Additionally, this registration signals to the political enemies of the United States our continuing preparedness. Finally, this process assures the President, the Congress and the Defense Department that we do not have to stand idly by or operate in a confused state during a national emergency.

"I feel that it is essential to act promptly. For more than

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five years the state of our military mobilization preparedness has steadily declined. My proposal addresses one major method to help the United States prepare for the future. The best time to prepare for war is in peace and one method for avoiding war is to be fully resolved to a strong defense.

I request that you give favorable support to my legislative initiative.

"In summary, I think that it is time to rebuild the Selective Service System and limit its mission solely to wartime preparedness. At this time, I do not favor a return to a peacetime draft but we need to rebuild a portion of the system for mobilization. Therefore, it is important to put time back in our favor. I would appreciate a thoughtful review of my

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proposal. In the interest of time, I have kept my comments
brief, should you or the members of the Committee desire I
would be pleased to answer questions now."