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CLOSE UP FOUNDATION - INTRODUCTION

IN 1972, THE UNITED STATES CHANGED THE WAY IT RECRUITED
MANPOWER FOR ITS DEFENSE.

WE SCRAPPED THE DRAFT AND MOVED TO AN ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE.

THIS WAS PROPOSED BY THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION AND WAS
SUPPORTED BY THE CONGRESS. AT THAT TIME, THE VIETNAM WAR WAS
BOTHERING PEOPLE EXTREMELY AND WHAT WAS DONE WAS POLITICALLY POPULAR.

WE WERE TOLD THAT WE COULD ACQUIRE SUFFICIENT MANPOWER FOR
THE DEFENSE OF OUR FLAG AND OUR COUNTRY BY VOLUNTEERS. WE WERE
TOLD THAT ENOUGH YOUNG PEOPLE WOULD COME FORWARD ON THEIR OWN TO
MEET OUR DEFENSE NEEDS.

SO WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

SINCE THAT TIME, THE U.S. ARMY RESERVES HAVE DECLINED IN
STRENGTH EACH YEAR UNTIL RIGHT NOW WE ARE AT THE LOWEST POINT IN
THE NUMBER OF OUR RESERVES IN THE LAST 20 YEARS.

YET WE DEPEND HEAVILY ON THE RESERVES FOR OUR NATIONAL DEFENSE BECAUSE UNDER THE ALL-VOLUNTEER CONCEPT ONE-HALF OF THE DEPLOYABLE UNITS AND MANPOWER IS MADE UP OF THE RESERVES AND THE NATIONAL GUARD.

IN FACT, THE WHOLE ARMY HAS SUFFERED FROM DWINDLING NUMBERS AND THE FILLER PERSONNEL IN THE READY RESERVE HAS GONE DOWN FROM 900,000 IN 1972 TO ABOUT 150,000 AT PRESENT AND IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE IT IS GOING TO GET ANY BETTER UNDER THE PRESENT SYSTEM.

THIS IS AN ALARMING FIGURE SINCE THIS POOL OF PEOPLE IS SUPPOSED TO FILL THE RANKS OF OUR ARMY DURING A NATIONAL EMERGENCY. AND WITH THE ALL-VOLUNTEER CONCEPT, THEY JUST AREN'T AVAILABLE.

MY POSITION IS THAT WE CANNOT ALLOW THIS SITUATION TO CONTINUE, ESPECIALLY IN THE LIGHT OF CONDITIONS THAT PREVAIL IN THE WORLD TODAY. THE PRESENT FERMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST, WHERE OUR EMBASSY HAS BEEN SEIZED IN IRAN AND OUR PEOPLE HELD HOSTAGE, SHOULD BE PROOF THAT THERE ARE EMERGENCIES THAT MAY HAVE TO BE MET AND I AM NOT ADVOCATING THAT WE SEND ANY STRIKE FORCE INTO TEHERAN.

CLEARLY, WITH THE SHORTAGE OF PEOPLE AVAILABLE IN A CRISIS OR EMERGENCY, WE NEED SOME SORT OF STANDBY SYSTEM THAT WE COULD USE IF WE NEEDED MORE TROOPS.

THIS IS WHY I HAVE INTRODUCED LEGISLATION CALLING FOR THE REGISTRATION OF YOUNG MEN WHEN THEY REACH 18 YEARS OF AGE.

LET ME SAY AT ONCE THAT THIS IS NOT A BILL CALLING FOR THE RESUMPTION OF THE DRAFT. I REALIZE THAT ANY EFFORT TO RESUME DRAFTING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE WOULD MEET WITH HEATED OPPOSITION ON THE PART OF SOME.

BUT REGISTRATION IS NEEDED BECAUSE WE NEED TO KNOW HOW MANY WOULD BE AVAILABLE IN AN EMERGENCY AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHERE THEY ARE. AT PRESENT WE DON'T KNOW WHERE OUR POTENTIAL SERVICEMEN ARE AND IF AN EMERGENCY AROSE, IT WOULD TAKE US SEVERAL MONTHS TO SET IN MOTION A CONSCRIPTION SYSTEM THAT WOULD HAVE MEN TRAINING TO BECOME SOLDIERS, SAILORS OR AIRMEN.

IT HAS BEEN ESTIMATED THAT IF AN EMERGENCY CAME UP, IT WOULD TAKE FROM FIVE TO SEVEN MONTHS TO GET THE SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM

IN GEAR SO THAT INDUCTIONS COULD START.

WE MAY NOT HAVE THAT MUCH TIME. CERTAINLY WE WOULD HAVE LESS TIME THAN WE DID WHEN WE WERE CAUGHT UNPREPARED AT PEARL HARBOR 38 YEARS AGO.

UNDER THE REGISTRATION BILL I HAVE PROPOSED, A YOUNG MAN WOULD REGISTER WITH HIS LOCAL SELECTIVE SERVICE BOARD IN THE YEAR OF HIS 18TH BIRTHDAY. THAT IS ALL.

BUT WITH THIS REGISTRATION, AND WITH THE REGISTERED NAMES AND ADDRESSES PLACED IN A COMPUTER, WE WOULD AT LEAST HAVE AN ADEQUATE INVENTORY OF AVAILABLE MEN IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY.

I FEEL THAT ENACTING SUCH A LAW AND CREATING SUCH A SYSTEM WOULD SERVE MORE THAN ONE PURPOSE.

FIRST, IT WOULD SIGNAL OUR ADVERSARIES THAT WE ARE NOT AS UNPREPARED AS WE SEEM AND THAT WE HAVE RETAINED THE WILL AND THE RESOLVE TO BEAR ARMS AND PROTECT OUR COUNTRY IN TIME OF DANGER.

IT WOULD ALSO TELL THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY THAT IF NECESSARY, THEY WILL HAVE THE DUTY TO DEFEND THE FREEDOMS THAT

THEIR FATHERS AND THEIR FATHERS' FATHERS WENT FORTH TO FIGHT FOR,
IF THAT SOUNDS LIKE PATRIOTISM, THEN THAT'S WHAT IT IS AND I HAVE
NEVER APOLOGIZED FOR BELIEVING ONE SHOULD LOVE THIS NATION
STRONGLY ENOUGH TO PROTECT IT.

THE FACTS ARE PLAIN.

THE ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE AND THE SYSTEM OF RECRUITING THAT
WE HAVE IS SIMPLY NOT WORKING AND KEEPING US STRONG ENOUGH.

WE CAN'T LET THAT SITUATION CONTINUE.

REGISTRATION OF 18-YEAR-OLDS WOULD AT LEAST SPEED UP FROM
MONTHS TO WEEKS THE TIME IT WOULD TAKE US TO ASSEMBLE AN ADEQUATE
ARMED FORCES IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY.

I BELIEVE IT SHOULD BE DONE AND DONE WITHOUT DELAY.