



Major General William J. McCaddin, President, NGAUS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Time to Correlate the Relationship of Peacetime to Wartime Manpower Needs

Is the all-volunteer force really satisfying national defense needs, as proponents continue to claim, or is it the fizzle that others consider it to be? Should the Selective Service System be retrieved from deep standby, and such parts of it as registration, classification and examination of young Americans resumed? How great a risk is the United States running, on the world scene, with badly understrength reserves, sagging personnel levels in the Active forces, and a heavily depleted Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) pool of already-trained manpower? What is the nation's actual, verifiable requirement for trained M-Day manpower? In today's dangerous world, with short-notice conflict an ever-present threat, is there really a distinction between a military manpower system adequate for peacetime purposes and one that will meet wartime needs?

Those key questions are at the heart of the current debate over military manpower deficiencies, and over proposals to revitalize the Selective Service System. Many, or most, senior leaders of the U.S. armed forces regard manning deficiencies as one of the most critical defense problems facing the nation. The facts they cite make bleak reading:

•Active Army down to about 750,000, falling far behind recruiting quotas, and preparing to toss another \$20 million into an urgent program to boost their input.

•Marines and Navy running 14 and 15 percent, respectively, behind recruiting goals, and even the Air Force failing by five percent for the first time.

•Army National Guard (ARNG) and Army Reserve (USAR) a combined total of more than 174,000 below their wartime need and years away from full recovery under the most favorable of circumstances.

•The Army IRR, vital as the primary source for fillers and casualty replacements in the early months of a conflict, down to a scant 135,000 enlisted members against a potential need for 700,000 for a high intensity NATO conflict.

•Selective Service and the Army training base unable to induct, train and put

the first sizable increment of inductees into military units much before M-Day twenty seven months.

The implications of that list of shortfalls and deficiencies is frightening to thoughtful leaders of the armed forces. It holds added significance for the ARNG and USAR. They see not just the possibility but the likelihood that some future national emergency will bring the complete destruction of their 6,000-plus units, as the individual members of those units are siphoned off after M-Day to serve as substitutes for individual replacements. With the long and extensive investment of time, resources and training effort that has been poured into those units, it would be the costliest IRR we've provided since we went into both World Wars I and II with identical deficiencies!

Eighteen ARNG divisions were sent to Europe in WWI as part of Pershing's AEF. Only 12 could be put to the task for which they were sent. The other six had to be used as sources of individual replacements, the IRR of their time. In WWII, it was two years or longer before most ARNG divisions were combat ready because they were levied numerous times for fillers and cadre for new units, before they could be committed to wartime missions. They were the initial IRR of WWII—and what a wasteful way to produce trained manpower!

Members of Congress have understandably dealt gingerly with the Selective Service issue, with the exception of such stalwarts as Representatives G.V. (Sonny)

"In public discussion of the all-volunteer force, we do not distinguish between the requirements for a satisfactory, or adequate, peacetime force and one that can fight a war. . . . The trouble is, we forget about war in time of peace. We think all we have to do is satisfy our peacetime needs. But there may be a war waiting for us; we don't know where and we don't know when, but we must be ready."

General Maxwell D. Taylor
August 2, 1978

Montgomery, Robin Beard, and Dick White, and Senator Sam Nunn. Reviving Selective Service is not exactly an issue upon which one can build a campaign for reelection in all too many constituencies!

Department of Defense officials at policy-making levels (as differentiated from military leaders of the Armed Forces) deserve little credit for their timid, short-sighted reluctance to support with vigor the revitalization of Selective Service. They finally conceded that resumption of registration might be okay, but they assigned little urgency to it. Defense solutions to the manpower crisis have fallen into the category of applying band-aids where massive transfusions are called for. Some draw outright scorn from Congress. Example: recall unobligated veterans to meet the early need for foxhole soldiers rather than taking the politically unpalatable course of reviving Selective Service to rebuild our trained manpower pool.

We believe a comforting but false distinction has been drawn between an adequate "peacetime" manpower system and one that would satisfy our "wartime" needs. In an age when a war conceivably can start with little warning, and require many thousands of fresh troops in its earliest weeks, such a distinction is no longer valid. We have been told repeatedly that we must maintain in peacetime the military force that must stand between us and our possible extinction as a nation in the early months of a future war. Yet we continue to coast along with a system which could not be converted to a "wartime" mode and produce its first measurable consignment of trained fighting men in less than six to seven months!

We know that even a resumption of registration will arouse violent opposition. It will take a great deal of political courage to align oneself with those who want to "bring back the draft." But if the need is real (we think it is), and if it is explained honestly and factually (it can be), Americans will accept it as the necessity it is.

To take any other course is to delude ourselves and worse, to risk our national survival.

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