**Time to Correlate the Relationship of Peacetime to Wartime Manpower Needs**

It is the all-volunteer force really satisfying national defense needs, as proponents continue to claim, or is it the fitness that others consider it to be? Should the Selective Service System be retained from deep standby, and such parts of it as registration, classification and examination of Americans reasserted? How great a risk is the United States running, on the world scene, with badly understrength reserves, sagging personal 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 and administration officials see as one of the most critical defense problems facing the nation. The facts they cite make this problem:

- Active Army down to about 750,000, falling far behind recruiting quotas, preparing to lose another 200 million into an urgent program to boost their input.

- Marines and Navy running 14 percent 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 strength is 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 replacement needs in the early months of a conflict, down to 75,000 enlisted members against a potential need for 700,000 for a high intensity 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 plus seven months.

- The implications of that list of shortfalls and deficiencies is frightening to thoughtful leaders of the armed forces. It heightens added significance for the ARNG and especially the IRR. They see not just the potential vulnerability of the ARNG, 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 spirited off after M-Day to serve as subcomponents 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!

Eighnite 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 formed into units of replacement, the IRR of their time. In WWII, it was two years or longer before ARNG divisions were combat ready because they were levered numerous times for fillers and cadre for new units, until they could be committed to wartime missions. They were the initial IRR of a new era and what a wasteful way to produce trained manpower!

Members of Congress have understandably dealt gingerly with the Selective Service and its issues, with the exception of such stalwarts as Representatives V.O. (Sonny) 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 ARNG and IRR) on the Whole 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 signaled little urgency to Defense. Solution to the manpower crisis have fallen into the category of applying band-aids where massive transfusions are called for. Some draw out right auscultation from Congress. Example: recall unvaccinated veterans to make up an emergency need for toxoid soldiers rather than taking the politically unpalatable course of reviving Selective Service to revitalize 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 can conceivably start with little warning, and involving 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 what a wasteful way to produce trained manpower?

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