

# Policy Analysis

No. 351

August 31, 1999

## ***Fixing What Ain't Broke The Renewed Call for Conscription***

**by Doug Bandow**

### **Executive Summary**

The United States has relied on a volunteer military for most of its history. However, the Cold War transformed a number of American institutions, including the armed services. Washington retained conscription after World War II and did not abandon the practice until 1973.

Despite a rocky start, the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) now works exceedingly well, providing America with the best military in its history and in the world today. Yet recruiting and retention problems have begun to appear; moreover, the war against Yugoslavia has heightened concerns about the fairness of a volunteer military. The result has been an increasing number of calls for a return to conscription.

The draft was bad policy during the Cold War and would constitute amazing foolishness today. For instance, renewed conscription would reduce the quality of new service personnel.

Returning to the draft would also increase the costs of raising a military force. Conscription is an expensive process—for individuals, government, and society. For the armed services, a draft

would yield higher turnover, thus increasing training costs. Also, because few conscripts choose to make the military a career, the Pentagon would have to hike reenlistment benefits.

A draft would not improve the retention rate of skilled personnel or inculcate civic virtue. The military does have some serious personnel problems; however, such problems could be solved by returning to a foreign policy that is proper for a republic. The Clinton administration's promiscuous use of military force in conflicts irrelevant to U.S. security drives many potential recruits away from and current career personnel out of the service. Furthermore, policymakers should adjust compensation and benefits to more successfully attract both new recruits and skilled personnel in the years ahead.

A renewed draft would be bad for the military. But more important, conscription would be unfair and unjust—sacrificing the very constitutional liberties that the military is charged to defend.

---

*Doug Bandow is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute. He is the author or editor of several books, including Tripwire: Korea and U.S. Foreign Policy in a Changed World and Human Resources and Defense Manpower, and was a special assistant to President Reagan.*

**A growing chorus  
on behalf of  
conscription is  
being heard.**

## **Introduction**

Throughout the first 90 years of its existence, the federal government relied on volunteers to man its regular forces. Militia duty was compulsory in most states, but the requirements were limited (normally short terms under community leaders for local defense) and faded over time.<sup>1</sup> Although there is no record of the draft's being discussed at the Constitutional Convention, the concerns voiced by many about standing armies would have applied even more to a conscript force. Observes historian Jack Leach, "It is quite likely that had the delegates at Philadelphia extended the power to 'raise and support armies' by adding the phrase, 'by voluntary means, and if necessary by draft upon the male population,' they would have generated insurmountable opposition throughout the country and in the state ratifying conventions."<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, national conscription was imposed during the Civil War. It met substantial resistance in both the South and the North.<sup>3</sup> An even more comprehensive draft reappeared in World War I. Not surprisingly, the Supreme Court sustained conscription—it is hard to imagine a Court independent enough not to do so during wartime. However, the practice likely violated the original constitutional grant of powers (which authorized Congress to raise an army and call forth the usually state-conscripted militia rather than enact a federal draft), as well as the Thirteenth Amendment's proscription of involuntary servitude.<sup>4</sup>

After both the Civil War and World War I, conscription disappeared when hostilities ended. With war raging in Europe and a potential hegemonic threat in East Asia, Congress adopted the first peacetime draft in 1940. Conscription then persisted—with but a brief 15-month hiatus in 1947 and 1948—until 1973.<sup>5</sup> So accepted had the draft become during the Cold War that in 1967 a congressional advisory group, the so-called Clark Commission, rudely dis-

missed the idea of a volunteer military for "placing [the nation's] faith in its own citizenry to rally to its defense when the national security is threatened."<sup>6</sup>

President Nixon, however, who hoped the end of conscription would dampen protests against the Vietnam War, created the President's Commission on the All-Volunteer Force (known as the Gates Commission). The commission's report served as the blueprint for the AVF.<sup>7</sup>

The draft came to an end in 1973, forcing the Pentagon, which had for more than 40 years relied on coercion to fill its ranks, to convince hundreds of thousands of young men to volunteer. But low pay and poor social status for military service created a difficult transition, and the armed services suffered from inadequate and low-quality recruits, as well as high turnover. Almost immediately after the draft was repealed, its supporters counterattacked, urging a return to compulsion.

The debate raged for roughly a decade.<sup>8</sup> Reagan administration policies, particularly better pay and benefits and a renewed respect for military service, dramatically transformed the AVF.<sup>9</sup> By the end of the 1980s, pressure for conscription had dissipated. Although the Persian Gulf War led to scattered calls for a draft, the volunteer military's tremendous success quieted critics.<sup>10</sup> Later worries about young people's declining interest in joining the military also quickly disappeared.<sup>11</sup>

## **The Conscription Call**

Now, however, a growing chorus on behalf of conscription is being heard. George Wilson, former *Washington Post* military correspondent, argued that "the time has come to enact a fair, limited and selective draft to fill the billets that a reasonable amount of recruiting cannot fill."<sup>12</sup> Writing in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Ross Mackenzie suggested the reinstatement of conscription "for better cross-fertilization between civil-

ian and military.”<sup>13</sup> Columnist V. H. Krulak has denounced “the mercenary gun of a standing army” and endorses Universal Military Training.<sup>14</sup> Another columnist, Jim Cleaver, sees a draft as a means to reform juvenile delinquents.<sup>15</sup> *Washington Post* columnist Mark Shields has long criticized the AVF and called for reinstatement of conscription during the war against Yugoslavia.<sup>16</sup> Robert Maginnis, an analyst with the Christian activist group Family Research Council, advocates a “national debate” over a return to conscription.<sup>17</sup>

A few lawmakers have also expressed interest in restoring the draft. A decade ago, current presidential candidate Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) criticized the national service proposals that led to today’s AmeriCorps for not being compulsory and introduced legislation leading to a mandatory program. Sen. Charles Robb (D-Va.) disagreed only in McCain’s assessment of the political viability of such a program.<sup>18</sup> Last year, after hearing of the military’s recruiting woes, Sen. John Glenn (D-Ohio) wondered, “Do we go to a draft?”<sup>19</sup> Rep. Stephen Buyer (R-Ind.), chairman of the House National Security Committee’s Subcommittee on Military Personnel, suggested recently that “there are benefits to a draft.”<sup>20</sup> Rep. John Murtha (D-Pa.) has indicated his support for conscription. Rep. Solomon Ortiz (D-Tex.) pointed to growing personnel shortages in observing that “there will be a good possibility that if this trend continues, we’re going to very seriously look at the draft, at reviving the draft again.”<sup>21</sup> Similarly, Rep. Norman Sisisky (D-Va.) warns that conscription might become necessary if other steps to attract sufficient volunteers are not taken.

## Dubious Timing

The only explanation for the spectacle of policymakers’ discussing a return to a draft is that Washington is an irrational and incestuous place. Advocates of conscription

have typically based their case on national survival. Consider the argument of Georgetown professor Philip Gold in 1985: “Conscription is only necessary if it is to be the American purpose to offer this planet alternatives to either Armageddon or a communist New Dark Age. Nothing else, nothing less, can justify its return.”<sup>22</sup> Gold’s belief that America faced just such choices presented the best case for a draft—that America’s and the globe’s survival depended on it.

Conscription was not needed in 1985 and it certainly isn’t needed now. The United States is at peace. No major war threatens. Washington stands astride the globe as a colossus—its enemies are pathetic and its allies are secure. As Gen. Colin Powell said earlier this decade, “I’m running out of demons. I’m running out of villains. I’m down to Castro and Kim Il Sung.”<sup>23</sup> Together with its allies, America accounts for roughly 80 percent of the globe’s military outlays. The United States alone spends as much on defense as the next 10 powers combined. Allied states like France are abandoning conscription.<sup>24</sup> The usual case for a draft is absent. Gold, who is now president of Aretea, a Seattle-based think tank, today calls conscription “the absolutely positively worst idea,” one that “would generate nothing but massive disruption, expense, inefficiency and inequity.”<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, one cannot conceive of the circumstances in which a draft would be needed in the future. Although the Clinton administration plunged the country into war with Yugoslavia and predictions of future conflicts abound, none would involve a nation-threatening clash of mass armies—such as NATO versus the Warsaw Pact during the Cold War. No other nation even approaches U.S. military strength. Observes John Chipman, director of London’s International Institute for Strategic Studies, “The U.S., by itself, can take on pretty much any military threat you can imagine.”<sup>26</sup>

**One cannot conceive of the circumstances in which a draft would be needed in the future.**

**The armed services are having a difficult time holding pilots and other selected skill grades, such as computer technicians.**

## **A Potpourri of Reasons**

Why do advocates of conscription still argue for a return to the draft?

### **Poor Recruiting Results**

The proportion of 16- to 21-year-old men who enlisted in the military dropped from 34 percent in 1991 to 27 percent in 1997.<sup>27</sup> That is actually a slight rise from 26 percent in 1996, a historic low.<sup>28</sup> Last year Navy recruitment fell short by 7,000 sailors—or 12 percent—prompting George Wilson to declare, “When we were downsizing, the problem didn’t show up because we didn’t need a lot of new people. But now we do, and we can’t get them. The kids have too many other options.”<sup>29</sup>

Although the Army fell only 1 percent short of its recruiting target in 1998, it did have difficulties in filling particular specialties. Unfortunately, in 1999, that service is having a more difficult time; there is speculation that the Army could end up 10,000 under its desired strength by the end of the year.<sup>30</sup> Preliminary results suggest that the Air Force will also fall short.<sup>31</sup>

Unfortunately, the problems associated with low recruitment are only going to increase. The Army plans to recruit 75,000 new soldiers in 1999 but 84,000 in 2000. Army Secretary Louis Caldera worries that “the real challenge is going to come in future years.”<sup>32</sup>

### **Poor Retention**

The armed services are having a difficult time holding pilots and other selected skill grades, such as computer technicians. For instance, the Air Force is currently retaining only half the number of pilots it needs; Maj. Joe Roeder, the Air Force’s pilot retention manager, admits, “Now we’re left with a severe shortage of young pilots.”<sup>33</sup> Even annual bonuses of up to \$22,000 haven’t solved the problem. To the contrary, the separation rate rose 9 percent in 1998. The service is now losing three pilots for every two that it adds and estimates a potential short-

age of 2,000 pilots by the year 2002. Highly skilled airmen as well as officers are leaving the service.<sup>34</sup>

The Navy calculates that it has a worldwide shortage of 18,000 sailors. On average, ships sail with only 90 percent of their official complement.<sup>35</sup> Most vessels are rated only at the second-highest level of readiness, C-2. Adm. Archie Clemens, Pacific Fleet commander-in-chief, observed last fall, “This summer was tough on us.”<sup>36</sup> The nuclear aircraft carrier USS *Enterprise* has a crew of 2,900 instead of the preferred 3,150. Capt. Evan Chanik explains that “I can do my missions” but worries that “I have less ‘sponge’ if I get into sustained, high-tempo operations.”<sup>37</sup> Adm. Harold Gehman, head of the U.S. Atlantic Command, seemed a bit less confident. When asked by reporters if the Navy could execute its mission, he responded, “It all depends on what the definition of ‘it’ is.”<sup>38</sup>

Manpower shortages and readiness problems are evident in a number of Army divisions—ones that would be deployed in any war.<sup>39</sup> Patrick Pexton reported in the *Washington Post* that the Army is suffering shortages of armor and infantry.<sup>40</sup>

### **Pressure from Constant Deployments**

The Pentagon is having difficulty keeping up with the rising tempo of activity and new commitments. The Army has deployed overseas 29 times during the past decade compared with just 10 times during the previous 40 years.<sup>41</sup> The number of Air Force and Navy missions is up as well. Moreover, those numbers do not include “minor” deployments, such as sending 59 servicemen to Kenya in January 1998 to feed flood victims.<sup>42</sup>

The impact of that high tempo of operations on equipment maintenance, spare parts, and weapon supplies, as well as on soldiers’ combat skills is obvious. Moreover, constant deployment is also believed to be the most important reason for declining retention of Air Force pilots.<sup>43</sup> Continual operations are affecting the Navy in a simi-

lar way.<sup>44</sup> Complains Patrick Pexton, managing editor of the *Army Times*, “Pilots and airmen don’t know when their next 30-day, 45-day, 90-day or 180-day deployment away from home will come.”<sup>45</sup> The pressure trickles down to almost everyone in the service. F-16 crew chief Staff Sgt. William Simmons explains, “I’m just exhausted with all the changes, the continuous deployments.”<sup>46</sup> The prospect of simultaneous four-month tours in Saudi Arabia for weapons specialist Staff Sgt. Kathie Iorga and her husband caused her to quit the Air Force.<sup>47</sup>

The Pentagon responds to criticism of endless peacekeeping, peacemaking, no-fly enforcement, and other missions by arguing that soldiers at least appreciate their mission in Bosnia. The Department of Defense proudly reports that first-term soldiers serving in Bosnia reenlist at about the same rate (57.6 percent) as do those in other regions of Europe (57.8 percent). However, those soldiers reenlisting in Bosnia collect a tax-exempt bonus; even then their reenlistment rate barely matches that of their counterparts stationed in other regions of Europe. Moreover, midterm soldiers in Bosnia reenlist at a noticeably lower rate—70.2 percent—compared with 76.3 percent of their counterparts. The *New York Times* has reported that “the combat readiness, morale and effectiveness of the troops appears [sic] to plummet after six months of duty.”<sup>48</sup>

Unhappiness with the military’s role on the part of even a minority of soldiers and their families will have a noticeable impact on retention and ultimately recruiting. With a force whose members are older, have married in greater numbers, and have more children than the old conscript military, such dissatisfaction is almost guaranteed to rise.<sup>49</sup> (See Appendix, Table 1.) Should future “peacekeeping” enterprises misfire, as did the mission in Somalia, exploding public dissatisfaction would be quickly transmitted to the military. The public appears ready to acquiesce in the Clinton administration’s penchant for promiscuous intervention so long as the costs are largely hidden. However, Andrew Kohut of the Pew

Research Center observed that “should any mission turn bad, the response could be hugely negative.”<sup>50</sup>

### **The Expense of Recruiting and Pay**

The military already spends an average of \$7,187 per new recruit, up from \$5,460 (adjusted for inflation) a decade ago.<sup>51</sup> The Army’s cost runs \$11,187 per recruit. Falling numbers of recruits results in increased pressure to hike bonuses and compensation to improve recruiting and retention. George Wilson wonders, “How much is too much for recruiting an all-volunteer force?”<sup>52</sup>

### **The Unrepresentative Character of the AVF**

Enlisted soldiers are “disproportionately minorities, such as African Americans, and the less advantaged, paid at such low levels that they live on the edge of poverty during the nation’s greatest economic boom,” argues former health and human services secretary Joseph Califano.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, journalist Jacob Weisberg complains that “instead of a draft, which distributes risk fairly, we have a volunteer force that hires mainly minorities and working-class whites to bear the burden on behalf of those with brighter prospects.”<sup>54</sup> As evidence, Weisberg points out that two of the three soldiers captured by the Serbs on the Macedonian border during the war against Yugoslavia had Hispanic surnames.

### **The Lack of Connection between Political Leaders and the Military**

President Clinton is emblematic of an increasing number of members of Congress and other policymakers who have never served in the military—in contrast with most of the policy elite of the post-World War II generation. *Wall Street Journal* reporter Thomas Ricks complains, “Even after bungling an inherited mission in Somalia and then using U.S. forces to feed Rwandan refugees, invade Haiti, and enforce a peace agreement in Bosnia, the Clinton Administration did not see fit to follow Pentagon suggestions that it appoint someone with a

**Constant deployment is believed to be the most important reason for declining retention of Air Force pilots.**

**Most of the criticisms have been around since the founding of the AVF, and they are no more persuasive today than they were a quarter century ago.**

military background to a senior post on the National Security Council.”<sup>55</sup> The proportion of members of Congress who served in the military has dropped from more than 75 percent in 1971 to less than 34 percent in 1999. Furthermore, complains Ricks, not many legislators are even interested in defense issues.

Ricks advocates reinstating conscription. Similarly, the *Army Times* editorializes that a new draft “would ensure that future generations of political leaders would enter office understanding the military, its strengths and weaknesses, and its culture.”<sup>56</sup>

### **Inadequate Inculcation of the Values of Citizenship and Discipline in Younger Generations**

There is a widespread fear of a declining civic ethos among young people. Representative Buyer complains that “a lot of young people are escaping their civic responsibilities.”<sup>57</sup> Senator McCain explains, “I appreciate that the all-volunteer force has been very successful,” but, he adds, “we are raising a generation of not only leaders but middle-income Americans who have never served their country.”<sup>58</sup>

Some people view conscription as appropriate response to such concerns. In the view of George Wilson, “Even small draft calls” would help re-instill “the sense of obligation to serve.”<sup>59</sup> The *Army Times* would prefer a full national service draft: “The sense of duty that comes with public service also would rub off on large numbers of young people who might otherwise never consider a military career. Some would stay, to the military’s benefit. And others would leave, taking with them a healthy appreciation and respect for those who put their lives on the line in the name of liberty and freedom.”<sup>60</sup>

Taking a different approach is Jim Cleaver, who argued for conscription to use “old hard-shelled drill instructors or drill sergeants . . . as trainers for some of these young hoodlums who think they are the toughest, most invincible, and meanest

men on the face of the earth today.” In this way, he contends, “the gangs of young toughs who terrorize the nation and just about every community, could be trained to in fact protect the nation.”<sup>61</sup>

### **A Military Isolated from Society**

Others, in contrast, worry that the military emphasis on duty and other aspects of a so-called warrior ethos is leading to the isolation of the military from the rest of society.<sup>62</sup> Mackenzie contends that “without conscription, a distinct—and potentially dangerous—military cohort is unavoidable.”<sup>63</sup> McCain, clearly thinking about the nation’s political leadership, speaks of “a greater estrangement, a greater distancing between the Congress, traditional protectors of the military, and the military itself.”<sup>64</sup>

## **Missing the Point: Conscription as an Illusory Solution**

Although the lengthy bill of particulars against voluntarism appears impressive, there’s really no there there, as Gertrude Stein once said of Oakland. Most of the criticisms have been around since the founding of the AVF, and they are no more persuasive today than they were a quarter century ago.<sup>65</sup>

### **AVF Increases Overall Force Quality**

First, the military’s problem is not an inadequate quantity of recruits but an inadequate quantity of quality recruits. The AVF is choosier than a draft military—actually rejecting many bodies. Navy recruiter Petty Officer Benny Granillo explains, “Most of the people who walk into the office have something wrong with them.”<sup>66</sup> Of roughly 9 million males between the ages of 17 and 21, Maj. Gen. Evan Gaddis, commanding general of the Army, reports that “only 14 percent are the high quality, fully qualified and available prospects all military services want to recruit.”<sup>67</sup> The Pentagon could

solve its recruiting problems tomorrow if it simply lowered its standards.

In fact, last year the Navy discussed a modest relaxation of standards that would help it meet its need for “general detail” sailors, who perform largely unskilled tasks.<sup>68</sup> In January Navy Secretary Richard Danzig decided to increase from 5 to 10 percent the number of recruits who possess a GED instead of a high school diploma. In response to his service’s recruiting difficulties this year, Army Secretary Caldera has made a similar proposal. He complains that the strict high school graduation requirement “has put us in a box that is really hurting our ability to recruit.”<sup>69</sup>

Although no doubt exists that higher quality is desirable—brighter recruits with more education perform better and are more likely to finish their tours—the Pentagon’s specific goals are arbitrary. Two years ago the Army reduced its objective for high school diploma graduates from 95 to 90 percent. Lt. Gen. Frederick Vollrath, the Army’s deputy chief of staff for personnel, acknowledged that the former standard “was not based on any absolute analytical requirement in order to sustain the force.”<sup>70</sup> According to Vollrath, the recruiting command had set the higher goal because it thought that goal was achievable.

As a result, despite its current problems, the AVF remains a far higher quality force than the military of the draft era. On the important measures of high school graduation and scores on the Armed Forces Qualifying Test (AFQT), today’s military is far superior. The percentage of “high-quality” enlistees—that is, those with high school degrees and above-average scores on the AFQT—jumped 50 percent between 1973 and 1997.<sup>71</sup> Indeed, the AVF is providing the best military personnel that America has ever had. (See Appendix, Tables 2–4.)

For that reason, few leaders in the armed services would like to return to conscription. Gordon Sullivan, former Army chief of staff and current president of the Association of the United States Army, states, “Military

commanders prefer high-quality volunteers to mixed-quality draftees.”<sup>72</sup> Retired Lt. Gen. Al Lenhardt, formerly the Army’s chief recruiter, emphasizes that conscription would yield a poorer-quality force.<sup>73</sup> Retired Maj. Gen. Ted Stroup, former Army deputy chief of staff for personnel, says that a draft might deliver the required quantity, “but you wouldn’t get the quality or the staying power that you also need.”<sup>74</sup> The Pentagon observes:

Periodically, there are laments from some outside the Defense establishment regarding the absence of the draft. If only the draft were operating again, the nostalgic arguments go, representation would be assured, declining propensity would be countered, women would not be needed to substitute for men, and all would be well. These assumptions turn out to be more wishful thinking than iron-clad reality.<sup>75</sup>

The AVF attracts superior personnel for two important reasons. First, the services can choose not to accept people who are not high school graduates and so-called Category IVs and Vs, people who score well below average on the AFQT. As the Department of Defense puts it, “Non-graduates and persons with lower aptitude scores would be more vulnerable to Uncle Sam’s draft call than they would be to today’s invitation to enlist.”<sup>76</sup>

Moreover, a volunteer military draws in people who want to be there instead of dragging people who do not, thereby creating a dramatically more positive dynamic. Thus, the military can discharge soldiers who abuse drugs, perform poorly, or are not otherwise suited to service life.<sup>77</sup> In contrast, the services must retain draftees at all cost, lest indiscipline become a means of escape.<sup>78</sup> All phases of military life are transformed for the better when the armed forces are made up of people who join voluntarily and desire to succeed.

Career retention has long been a Pentagon concern.<sup>79</sup> However, conscription would

**Despite its current problems, the AVF remains a far higher quality force than the military of the draft era.**

**All phases of military life are transformed for the better when the armed forces are made up of people who join voluntarily and desire to succeed.**

actually exacerbate that problem. A draft brings in untrained first termers, not experienced pilots. And conscripts, who don't want to be in uniform, reenlist in far lower numbers than do volunteers. Only 10 percent of first termers stayed in the military when service was mandatory compared with about 50 percent today under the AVF. Moreover, the increased difficulties in working with recalcitrant soldiers who have been drafted means even experienced non-commissioned officers are less likely to remain. For instance, retention of those personnel in their fourth year of service doubled between FY71 and FY77.<sup>80</sup> The mean length of service jumped from about 70 months in 1973 to 90 months in 1997.<sup>81</sup> Thus, Francis Rush, acting assistant secretary of defense for force management policy, reports, "A force composed of volunteers is more stable and career-oriented, thereby leading to improved experience and performance, with lower training and turnover costs than we would find with a draft."<sup>82</sup>

A return to conscription would yield a less-experienced, less-stable, and less-efficient military. Inducement, not coercion, is the answer to sagging retention. Studies consistently indicate that the most effective remedy is improved compensation.<sup>83</sup>

### **The Real Reasons for Retention and Recruiting Problems**

The pressure created by increased deployments is very real. However, the contention that patrolling the artificial state of Bosnia is comparable in national interest to containing the Soviet Union during the Cold War does not pass the laugh test. It should come as no surprise that undertaking frivolous commitments like the one to Bosnia is straining the military. Renewing conscription is not the proper remedy for that problem.

One pilot told *Investor's Business Daily* that "this isn't the Air Force I joined, where my job was to kill our enemies as fast as possible and return home." Another complained, "We're not really fighting the

country's wars; we're just acting like the world's policeman."<sup>84</sup> An Army officer explained in his resignation letter, "I didn't join the Army to be a peacekeeper."<sup>85</sup>

Half of the soldiers surveyed who served in Haiti thought no important American interest was at stake in that country; troops who served in Somalia were significantly less supportive of such endeavors.<sup>86</sup> Anecdotal evidence—such as graffiti at U.S. installations—also suggests dissatisfaction with the occupation of Bosnia, a mission that seems endless and without purpose.

Even soldiers who believe in such operations may be unwilling to perform them constantly. Sergeant, first class Robert Canarios decided to get out of the Army after 13 years. Although proud of his service in Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia, and Macedonia, he explained to the *Wall Street Journal*, "With all these pockets of instability in the world, is it our responsibility to be big brother every time there's a problem?"<sup>87</sup>

Potential recruits have much the same reaction. Reports of both increasing and increasingly unpleasant duty, combined with difficulty in carrying out missions, appear to be hindering the enlistment of new soldiers.<sup>88</sup>

Interviews in focus groups of young men indicate that America's mounting role as the international policeman is among the most important deterrents to joining the military. Operation Desert Shield (in contrast with Desert Storm) and intervention in both Somalia and Haiti all reduced young men's perceived likelihood to serve; the effects of the latter two operations were particularly dramatic.<sup>89</sup> Two researchers at the Defense Manpower Data Center reported:

The focus group results suggest that youth today generally view the military as less attractive than before the end of the Cold War. A considerable number of young men indicated they did not wish to serve as peacekeepers in foreign countries. They indicated that military service had become

more dangerous. Some seemed to think that, if they were in uniform when US troops were deployed, they would inevitably be deployed and, consequently, be put in harm's way. Some suggested that recent military ventures were motivated by the interests of national leaders—Congress or the President—but were not in the national interest. They objected to being put in jeopardy to fight someone else's battles.<sup>90</sup>

Parents share that concern. Indeed, they “generally were not supportive of this evolving role for the United States military.”<sup>91</sup> However, neither sons nor parents questioned “the need for military service in either defense of our own country or in domestic assistance, e.g., hurricane relief.”<sup>92</sup>

The reluctance of potential recruits, their parents, and current service people to support today's interventionist policies indicates that those policies don't make sense or have been inadequately explained, or both. Policymakers should deal with the policies that are causing the problem instead of reinstating the draft. Conscription would eliminate the need to justify dubious deployments, not make them more justifiable.

## The Mirage of Cost Savings

Coercion is not cheaper than voluntarism. Some savings in recruiting costs might be achieved, but even radical pay cuts would save little because first termers earn the least. And the obvious unfairness of dramatically reducing benefits for the unfortunate few singled out for conscription would likely discourage Congress from slashing draftees' pay, limiting any potential savings.

Moreover, any savings would be offset by increased costs elsewhere. For example, conscripts tend to serve shorter terms (volunteers can be asked to serve four or more years compared with the typical draft term of two years) and, as noted earlier, reenlist at far

lower rates than do volunteers. Increased turnover would hike total costs: the Pentagon would have to train larger numbers of conscripts and offer more generous reenlistment pay and bonuses to build and retain a career force. In addition to that would be the costs of classification, induction, and enforcement. Such a national conscription apparatus would have to be even more extensive and draconian today when the case for the draft—and thus the social consensus behind it—would be so weak.

In 1982 the Reagan administration's Military Manpower Task Force concluded that a return to the draft would actually hike budget costs by about \$1 billion annually: “The anticipated cost savings,” stated the commission, “would probably be illusory.”<sup>93</sup> Similar estimates of increased costs from other studies during the mid-1980s ran from \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion.<sup>94</sup> A report by the consulting group Sylogistics, Inc., concluded that “as a method of personnel procurement, an active force draft could be quite costly compared to today's AVF.”<sup>95</sup>

Conscription would also make the military less efficient because the services would make less effort to use productively their most valuable resource: manpower. Before becoming navy secretary, Richard Danzig observed that “when it receives people at no cost, the military, like most institutions when this happens, tends to treat them as if they were virtually of no worth.”<sup>96</sup> Thus, the advent of the AVF caused manpower analyst Kenneth Coffey to propose more carefully calibrated mobilization and deployment policies to meet the threat of a Warsaw Pact invasion.<sup>97</sup>

The existence of a draft also affects battlefield tactics. The availability of essentially endless supplies of manpower allowed the North in the Civil War and most of the countries participating in World War I to undertake those bloody wars of attrition. In the latter conflict, British prime minister David Lloyd George raged, “The generals could not be expected to judge the issue dispassionately. Their reckless wastage of

**A return to conscription would yield a less-experienced, less-stable, and less-efficient military.**

**A draft increases total costs for society and then shifts the burden—said to be too high for everyone to bear—to a few 18-year-old conscripts.**

the man power so lavishly placed at their disposal also vitiated their judgement.”<sup>98</sup> To constrain the generals, Lloyd George limited troop reinforcements.

## **Imposing Unfair Social Costs**

A draft would generate significant social costs. The Vietnam era demonstrated that the price of avoidance activities and economic dislocations is substantial. Conscription created an entire opposition industry, replete with emigration, early marriages, unnecessary schooling, inefficient employment, and political violence. In short, a draft increases total costs for society and then shifts the burden—said to be too high for everyone to bear—to a few 18-year-old conscripts.

If the government wants to save money, it might as well draft civilian defense workers or postal employees instead of military personnel. In fact, Rep. James Wadsworth (R-N.Y.), a sponsor of the Selective Service and Training Act of 1940, subsequently proposed a civilian industrial draft: “Every civilian adult in the United States otherwise competent and with certain liberal exemption owes it as a duty to serve in a civilian capacity where he or she is most needed.”<sup>99</sup>

### **Conscription Would Not Make the Military More “Representative”**

The question of “representativeness” involves a hideous tangle of issues. The notion that the military is dominated by ignorant minorities and lower-class whites is both grossly offensive and a ridiculous myth.<sup>100</sup> In general, the AVF has a few more African-Americans, high school graduates, above-average students, and members of the middle class and slightly fewer college graduates, Hispanics, and members of the under- and upper-classes. The military is quintessentially middle America. (See Appendix, Tables 2–8.)

More specifically, virtually all members of the armed forces—active and selected reserves—have high school diplomas (or their

equivalent) compared with just 79 percent of the comparable population of youth. Practically all new recruits fall in the top three AFQT categories in contrast with 69 percent of their civilian counterparts. Furthermore, new soldiers read at a higher level than civilian youth of the same age.

Almost all officers have at least a baccalaureate degree.<sup>101</sup> Fewer enlistees have college degrees than their civilian counterparts, but roughly similar numbers are college capable. Young recruits join the military when others their age are attending university. But the SAT scores of new enlistees suggest that they are qualified to attend a representative sample of colleges.<sup>102</sup> Past surveys have found servicemen to have higher educational aspirations than do comparable civilians.

As for socioeconomic status, Sue Berryman of Columbia University reports that it is incontestable that enlistees “do not *come from the more marginal groups on any of four dimensions: family socioeconomic status, measured verbal and quantitative abilities, educational achievement, and work orientation.*”<sup>103</sup> The Pentagon makes much the same point:

Analysis of Vietnam era veterans indicated that individuals of high socioeconomic status comprised about half the proportion of draftees compared to their representation in the overall population. Three systematic analyses of the socioeconomic composition of accessions during the volunteer period suggest that little has changed with the all-volunteer force. All found that members of the military tended to come from backgrounds that were somewhat lower in socioeconomic status than the U.S. average, but that the differences between the military and the comparison groups were relatively modest. These results have been confirmed in recent editions of this report, which portray a socioeconomic composition of enlisted acces-

sions similar to the population as a whole, but with the top quartile of the population underrepresented. While the socioeconomic status of recruits is slightly lower than the general population, today's recruits have higher levels of education, measured aptitudes, and reading skills than their civilian counterparts.<sup>104</sup>

As stated earlier, it is true that fewer American political leaders have served in the military today than served in the past. But that largely reflects the passing of the World War II generation—a very high percentage of young men were drawn into the military between 1941 and 1945 and again during the Korean War between 1950 and 1953—instead of the end of conscription. World War II alone generated 16 million veterans. In contrast, only 2.5 million men and women served in Vietnam. And although most of the baby boomers in positions of authority today—from the president on down—were subject to the draft, many avoided it.

Moreover, the World War II generation was unique in American history; the only other time an entire generation served in the military was during the Civil War. During most of the nation's history, the military was appropriately small, and the number of national leaders who had served in it was few. No ill effects were obvious at the time: no Praetorian elite grew up among the military, nor did civilian leaders wantonly squander soldiers' lives.

Despite the endless—and endlessly ferocious—arguments over representativeness, the most important point may be how little conscription would affect the composition of today's force. Newly enlisted accessions fell from 405,650 in FY73 to 167,287 in FY95. In FY97 the military added 188,895 new recruits, or about 13 percent of the total force of 1.4 million. (See Appendix, Table 9.) Since few draftees reenlist, conscription would change primarily the composition of this small, transient pool of new recruits.

And even there the change would be min-

imal. More than 3.8 million men and women turn 18 every year (that number will exceed 4 million early next century). Assume a draft of men only: just 9.5 percent of those eligible would end up in uniform, which is a far lower percentage than in years past.<sup>105</sup> (See Appendix, Table 10.) Moreover, some analysts have criticized the “blatant discrimination” of male-only registration and conscription.<sup>106</sup> In a draft of men and women, the percentage of those chosen from the available pool would be less than 5 percent.

Whether 5 or 10 percent, such a small, selective sample would include only a few more college graduates and sons of the elite (along with less-able men whom the military currently rejects) than does the current group of new enlistees. But the number of conscripts would fall even further if volunteers were still accepted—not to accept them would be inane. Unless pay for new soldiers were reduced to “cigarette money”—unlikely, given the obvious unfairness of being one of so few selected—the number of draftees could be as low as 10 or 20 thousand annually.<sup>107</sup> As a result, the overall change in the representativeness of the military would be nil.<sup>108</sup>

## Draft and Foreign Policy Adventurism

Which kind of force is the most effective constraint on foreign policy adventurism? Advocates of conscription usually contend that a draft, by imposing casualties on all groups in society, limits the inducement for foreign intervention. For instance, Joseph Califano—who worked for Presidents Lyndon Johnson and Jimmy Carter—contends that “the all-volunteer force has made it too easy for a president to order American troops and aircraft into wars and dangerous ‘peacekeeping’ adventures.”<sup>109</sup>

Similarly, *USA Today* columnist Walter Shapiro, a Vietnam dove turned Kosovo hawk, worries that “dividing my time between upscale enclaves in Manhattan and Washington, I do not have any friends

**The notion that the military is dominated by ignorant minorities and lower-class whites is both grossly offensive and a ridiculous myth.**

**The most important point may be how little conscription would affect the composition of today's force.**

whose sons or daughters have enlisted in the armed forces, let alone are at risk in Kosovo. It is troubling that the volunteer military has left me so isolated from the brave men and women who are on the front lines of America's crusade against ethnic cleansing."<sup>110</sup>

In contrast, Charles Moskos of Northwestern University argues that the lack of a draft—and a consequent sense of national commitment—reduces political support for a significant number of combat deaths.<sup>111</sup> But most likely it is the absence of important national goals that can be advanced only through military action and not the absence of a political consensus formed around a conscript military that militates against heavy casualties. Quite simply, in the public's mind, no recent intervention or proposed intervention has warranted accepting a significant number of combat deaths.

For reasons different from those offered by Moskos, experience suggests that the AVF is a powerful constraint on militarism. During the Vietnam War conscription provided the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administrations with a ready supply of manpower to follow increasingly unpopular policies. Only after years of mounting casualties did public opposition, inflamed by the existence of the draft, grow sufficiently to end the war. Similar was the experience in France, where a conscript military was eventually used to fight an unpopular colonial war in Algeria; that conscript military even intervened in domestic French politics.<sup>112</sup> Had the United States relied on a volunteer force in Vietnam, however, average American young people—who bore the greatest cost of the fighting—could have ultimately halted the war by refusing to join.

Moreover, as noted earlier, the AVF represents mainstream America. Indeed, reliance on the reserves during the Persian Gulf War immediately spread the impact of George Bush's decision to go to war to all sectors of society, including the professional classes.<sup>113</sup> The public seems to accept frequent deployments today only because they have so far

generated few casualties, not because America is employing a force of military professionals.

In fact, the concern about maintaining Washington's new commitments in Bosnia and elsewhere demonstrates that today's advocates of conscription see the draft as a means of maintaining unpopular and unnecessary deployments. Far from allowing political leaders to prosecute elitist wars without popular support, the AVF is starting to constrain officials who want to undertake just such endeavors. Should significant casualties occur in the occupation of Kosovo or intervention elsewhere, potential recruits could transform Washington's strategy by refusing to join.

## **National Disservice**

A number of people have long sought to link conscription to national service, thus creating a universal draft.<sup>114</sup> Thomas Ricks proposes one example: "Along the lines of the current German system, youths could be given the choice of performing, say, eighteen months of military service or two years of public service."<sup>115</sup> Other advocates are less specific. Steven Waldman, formerly a staffer at the Corporation for National Service, argues, "Whether or not it is compulsory, some form of national service should be universal."<sup>116</sup>

However, national service would offer no additional advantages to the military. Although the system would be "fair" because everyone had to serve, there is no reason to believe that the government could efficiently employ millions of 18-year-olds. Rational people should tremble at the prospect of turning those lives over to Washington.<sup>117</sup> The practical difficulties with such a system would be overwhelming.<sup>118</sup>

Furthermore, it is one thing to drag someone into uniform under penalty of prison to defend the nation; it is quite another to do so to clean parks or bedpans. Advocates of national service treat constitutional liberties

with criminal contempt. As then-military conscription advocate Philip Gold rightly argued more than a decade ago, the proposal for mandatory civilian service was “utterly pernicious, not only in its desire to insure equity by spreading hardship, but also for its attempt to use conscription for social engineering. If the military claim is to have any validity, it must remain unique.”<sup>119</sup>

Civilian conscription could also degrade military effectiveness either by creating competition for quality recruits or by overloading the services with unnecessary personnel. For instance, there is evidence that universal service has harmed Israel’s military, resulting “in a bloated officer corps as well as an under-trained and unready army in which many conscripts have no real jobs.”<sup>120</sup> In addition to creating other problems, large-scale voluntary national service programs would almost certainly divert bright young people from the military.<sup>121</sup> Even today’s limited AmeriCorps may be having an adverse effect on military recruitment: more than half of young men surveyed opine that “AmeriCorps and other programs offer better ways to get money for college.”<sup>122</sup> Yet the president recently proposed to double the number of participants in that program.

## Unfair and Stupid

The result of a renewed draft would be to substitute some people who do not want to serve for some who do. Reinstating conscription would add to the armed services a few brighter soldiers along with many who were less bright. The draft would be socially disruptive and economically costly; it would harm military cohesion, discipline, and retention. Finally, conscription would be grossly unfair to the few 18-year-olds who found themselves unwillingly in uniform while a vast majority of their compatriots went about their lives as before.

A justification for such a policy is hard to conjure up. At least a legitimate, though unconvincing, argument could be made for

conscription if it were to be universal and directed at preventing a new “Dark Ages”—as Philip Gold once contended.<sup>123</sup> It is much harder to make a case for taking at most 9.5 percent of 18-year-old males when no serious international threats beckon. Only two arguments appear to have any force at all.

### New Commitments

The first is that only with a draft can America fulfill all of its new commitments: in Bosnia, Haiti, Macedonia, Somalia, Kosovo, and who knows where else in the coming years. Today soldiers are understandably less than enthusiastic about serving in such places. The only criterion for U.S. intervention in those conflicts appears to be that no serious American interest be involved.

Whatever the merits may be of what Johns Hopkins University professor Michael Mandelbaum has derisively called “foreign policy as social work,”<sup>124</sup> no justification exists for forcing young Americans into uniform to undertake that task.<sup>125</sup> For most of America’s history, the only argument for compulsion was that a draft was necessary to preserve the United States from a threat. Indeed, when Congress reinstated the draft in 1940, the deployment of conscripts was limited to U.S. possessions or the Western Hemisphere.<sup>126</sup> For years Britain and France followed a similar policy. The former maintained its global empire through volunteers and moved to coercion only during World War I; the latter originally restricted the use of draftees in its ill-fated colonial adventures in Vietnam and Algeria. Observes Philip Gold, “Only the United States, among democracies, has assumed since World War II that draftees could be sent anywhere to do anything.”<sup>127</sup> Again, advocates of conscription are pushing for a draft to sustain precisely the most frivolous of America’s commitments.

However, 18-year-old Americans have no duty to suit up to patrol a new colonial empire, attempt to mend failed societies, rebuild Humpty Dumpty states, and settle ancient quarrels. What better evidence is

**Today’s advocates of conscription see the draft as a means of maintaining unpopular and unnecessary deployments.**

**Eighteen-year-old Americans have no duty to suit up to patrol a new colonial empire, attempt to mend failed societies, rebuild Humpty Dumpty states, and settle ancient quarrels.**

there that such conflicts are not worth the bones of a single healthy American rifleman than the refusal of a free people in a free society to enlist for such duty. One could be forgiven for believing that much of the limited support for undertaking such new roles, at least in the Pentagon, has more to do with institutional self-preservation than with national defense.<sup>128</sup>

Even Washington's more serious commitments are no argument for conscription. For example, the United States maintains 100,000 soldiers in Europe to defend against phantom divisions of the Red Army. Britain, France, and Germany together spend more on the military than does Russia. Japan is the second-ranking global economic power and faces no serious security threats; South Korea possesses nearly 30 times the GDP of its communist North Korean antagonist. It is hard to make a serious argument on the basis of national interest for the presence of any U.S. troops in those regions—especially a presence provided by a draft.<sup>129</sup>

**Moral Duties**

The second argument with any resonance is that conscription would instill a sense of the moral duties of citizenship. That contention deserves to be taken seriously because we all do have important moral obligations to one another.

However, those duties are owed to others in society—not to the state. And they are owed by everyone, not just the 18-year-old males who would most likely be drafted. It is all too convenient for leaders well beyond draft age to sit in the comfort of their offices (in Congress, think tanks, or newspapers) and pontificate about the duty of young people to serve everyone else. In one discussion years ago, Gen. William Westmoreland explained that it would be a “privilege” to be conscripted to serve;<sup>130</sup> such a privilege should be enjoyed first and foremost with those advocating a draft.

Moreover, a volunteer military places the defense burden on all citizens. Through the AVF, society issues a call to patriotic youth

to join the military, while sending the bill to everyone—old and young alike. At the same time, as a free people we withhold from government the extraordinary (and dangerous) power to order its citizens to fight and die. That is the proper way for a republic dedicated to the protection of individual liberty to defend itself.

Is military service nevertheless needed to teach citizenship values? If those values are not instilled by family, church, community, and school during childhood and adolescence, it is unlikely that they will be during a couple of years of forced service in the Army. Decades of peacetime conscription did not convince Americans that the war in Vietnam involved a vital national interest. The French army found that it was unable to impose upon draftees the high command's belief that Algeria should be considered part of the French homeland.<sup>131</sup> Nor should we want the military to forcibly transmit a particular set of values. The armed forces are a tool to defend a free society, not a mechanism to indoctrinate a free people.

Separate from the issue of conscription is peacetime draft registration. Peacetime registration has been justified as a form of insurance, should an emergency arise. However, through postmobilization registration, America made a smooth transition to conscription in 1917 and 1940. With the advances in technology and transportation that have occurred in succeeding decades, ongoing registration is obsolete; indeed, given the high mobility of young men, a postmobilization system would be more accurate and thus more fair. Today's proponents of registration have been reduced to silly arguments; for example, that registration will help combat the threat of nuclear proliferation. Such an argument presumes that an outdated list of untrained 18- to 24-year-olds is a more fearsome deterrent than thousands of U.S. nuclear warheads.<sup>132</sup>

**What to Do?**

There is no gainsaying that the AVF has

problems with recruiting and retention. And such difficulties are likely to persist to some degree in the future: there are fewer 16- to 19-year-olds than a decade ago, and fewer of them are unemployed in today's strong economy. Twenty percent more go to college today than did a decade ago. Pacific Fleet commander Admiral Clemins says, "We're now finding out what an all-volunteer force costs when there is zero unemployment."<sup>133</sup> In a world where America rides high and faces no obvious security threats, even the most patriotic young people are likely to see civilian jobs as a good alternative to military service.<sup>134</sup>

Moreover, Maj. Gen. Garry Parks, commanding general of the Marine Corps Recruiting Command, reports that "negative sociological trends, such as increased drug and alcohol experimentation and abuse, broken families, and lack of physical fitness preparation, are problematic areas that negatively influence the national pool of available young people."<sup>135</sup> The Pentagon also points to the decline in the number of family members and friends who have served and thus "impart knowledge and endorse the profession of arms as an option."<sup>136</sup>

What, then, to do? Obvious steps include adding recruiters, increasing advertising, and improving marketing. Moreover, better screening and preparation of recruits might reduce attrition. Such measures would help, but the challenge facing the military is more fundamental.

Most important, Washington should return to a foreign policy appropriate for a republic rather than an empire. Deputy Defense Secretary John Hamre argued last year, "We can't afford to get any smaller."<sup>137</sup> But even substantial cuts would leave America with the globe's strongest military, especially if the military more effectively transformed itself for a new age. Philip Gold complains that "the present military is an Industrial Age, labor-intensive structure ill-suited to 21st-century technologies and threats. Properly organized, equipped and with more superfluous bases closed and

many support functions privatized, it could easily drop to 1.2 million or less."<sup>138</sup>

At issue, then, is not U.S. security but the security of Washington's allies and clients. The Cold War deformed America's traditional reluctance to get entangled in overseas conflicts and brought with it the only peacetime draft in U.S. history not presaging an imminent "hot" war. Excessive U.S. involvement continues today. Army spokesman Lt. Col. Lew Boone explains that "our basic doctrine is still to fight two nearly simultaneous wars."<sup>139</sup> However, the end of hegemonic communism—the Soviet Union, the Warsaw Pact, the global network of Soviet surrogates, and ideologically aggressive regimes like Maoist China—has largely eliminated the threat to U.S. allies in Europe and East Asia. At the same time, America's friends have become populous, prosperous, and quite capable of defending themselves from any conceivable threats in the near future.<sup>140</sup>

Thus, Washington should be phasing out antiquated alliances and treaties and downsizing its forces accordingly. Such steps should be taken over time and in consultation with America's allies. The United States should move from being meddler of first resort to being balancer of last resort. The first line of defense should be provided by allied states—with a still-powerful but smaller American military in reserve for use against a hegemonic threat that couldn't be contained by friendly nations.<sup>141</sup>

Furthermore, the United States should drop its potpourri of nonsensical New World Order commitments—namely, trying to build a nonexistent nation in Bosnia and settling a brutal civil war in Kosovo. Although Secretary of State Madeleine Albright claims that even she doesn't expect America to be "the world's policeman," as of March 1, 1999, President Clinton had deployed U.S. forces more than 46 times—almost four times as often as did President Bush and three times as often as did President Reagan.<sup>142</sup> Occupation of the Serbian province of Kosovo is hard to consider as anything other than playing globocop. If the Europeans or Asians

**The armed forces are a tool to defend a free society, not a mechanism to indoctrinate a free people.**

**Washington  
should return to a  
foreign policy  
appropriate for a  
republic rather  
than an empire.**

want to go to war for such purposes, let them. But there is no need for the United States to take on such a neoimperialistic role.

Returning to a more traditional, restrained international role would reduce pressure on the American armed forces. With a smaller force (under 1 million) less frequently deployed, the Pentagon would need fewer personnel—fewer first termers, careerists, NCOs, and officers. Thus, both recruiting and retention problems would disappear. George Wilson admits that dropping strategically superfluous commitments is an obvious alternative to his proposal for a selective draft, but, he argues, “nobody is talking seriously about doing that.”<sup>143</sup> It is time to do just that.

The prospect of not attempting to manage the globe horrifies some observers. Defense Secretary William Cohen contends, “We have to assume a great deal of burden in this world.”<sup>144</sup> Gordon Sullivan admits that “no one wants to return to the draft” but goes on to say that “neither can the nation avoid its role as the world’s sole superpower, unless it is willing to accept the greater risks associated with a more isolationist foreign policy.”<sup>145</sup>

Sullivan has the relationship exactly wrong, however. The risks associated with entanglement are far greater than those resulting from nonintervention. George Tenet, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, cites a number of international dangers.<sup>146</sup> Former vice president Dan Quayle has made much the same argument.<sup>147</sup> Robert Maginnis of the Family Research Council paints the picture of a dangerous world most dramatically:

Further downsizing the military is not an option. The post-Cold War world is increasingly dangerous. The Chinese, for example, are quickly building an offensive capability and are threatening U.S. interests in Asia. Now is not the time to abandon our friends like Taiwan, Japan and South Korea. China and Russia are selling

military weapons and technologies to rogue nations, such as Iran, Iraq, and North Korea, which threaten American interests. Conflicts in the Balkans, the Persian Gulf, Africa, and South America threaten U.S. interests as well. Terrorism and global crime syndicates require military monitoring.<sup>148</sup>

The vision of an embattled America sounds plausible—if one believes that the United States is acting alone in a hostile world. But Maginnis’s case collapses when one remembers that America’s adversaries face a Washington-dominated coalition that accounts for 80 percent of the globe’s military spending and encompasses all of the most economically and technologically advanced nations. Vague threats to “American interests” pale in comparison with the danger posed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

The countries presenting the most serious risks of war for America today, such as in Iraq and North Korea, are declining in strength.<sup>149</sup> Moreover, those threats are directed not at the United States itself but primarily at its allies, which are far more prosperous than most of their potential adversaries (compare, for example, South and North Korea, Western Europe and Russia, and Japan and China).

Most recent U.S. deployments of troops overseas, such as those in Bosnia and Kosovo, have nothing to do with U.S. security. The Yugoslavian civil war lasted longer than World War I without expanding because major powers established firebreaks to war instead of allowing alliances to act as transmission belts for war, as they did in 1914. Terrorism, too, is more likely to result from U.S. involvement overseas. As much as other groups or nations may dislike or even hate American values, they are unlikely to strike out violently unless Washington is seeking to impose its will on them.<sup>150</sup>

Would the larger world order turn nasty without constant U.S. meddling abroad?

Robert Kagan of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace complains, “If we’re not shaping the world, there are other, more dangerous people who’d like to step in and take our place.”<sup>151</sup> Although they might like to do so, those dangerous factions possess little ability to do so. Slobodan Milosevic is an egregious demagogue and thug, but a new world order is not his concern. Indeed, the many civil wars in the Balkans are the long-term results of Woodrow Wilson’s ill-fated attempt to shape the world by entering World War I. In short, those who want to impose a “Pax Americana” offer few benefits in return for the high costs, including pressure for a return to conscription.

## Military Culture

Another contentious issue is preserving (or perhaps restoring) the military’s unique culture. The armed forces have always been different. *Wall Street Journal* reporter Thomas Ricks writes, “Soldiers and their families give up many freedoms to this all-encompassing society.”<sup>152</sup> Indeed, cultural differences between the military and the civilian world have made it more difficult for some of those leaving military service to find civilian work.<sup>153</sup>

Yet something seems to be changing: although the propensity for women between 16 and 21 to enlist remained unchanged between 1991 and 1994, that of young men dropped by a third.<sup>154</sup> Elaine Donnelly, president of the Center for Military Readiness, worries that “there is something wrong with the changes in the culture of the military that is turning off young men, and young men are the primary market.”<sup>155</sup>

How much of its fundamental appeal the military has lost is a matter of serious debate.<sup>156</sup> Some people argue that issues like money and deployments are relatively unimportant; the real problem is “that the military as an institution is being eroded.”<sup>157</sup>

Part of that problem is whether service in the military has become more of an occupation than an institution. In particular,

recruiting appeals are now directed more to self-actualization than to service. Another issue is promotion: are soldiers promoted on the basis of their competence in management or in combat?<sup>158</sup>

Journalist James Fallows, among others, has blamed the AVF for civilianizing the military—that is, “converting its operating principles to those of the workaday world.”<sup>159</sup> Yet it is inconceivable that the military, especially the kind of conscript force that draft advocates say would be so representative of society, could have been kept isolated from larger currents in America. It would be hard enough to convince the public to countenance conscription; it would be impossible to convince the public to force the unfortunate few draftees to live on a base, avoid marrying, and abstain from the temptations of consumerism.

Moreover, it is our being at peace—not voluntarism—that raises questions about who gets promoted and why. Peacetime militaries are rarely well prepared for war. The AVF is no different from its predecessors—for example, the conscript force that was badly mauled in the early days of the Korean War.

A related concern is the transformation of the military’s mission from fighting wars to international social engineering: peacekeeping, peacemaking, humanitarian relief, and more. Such missions, temporarily at least, degrade the fighting capacity of military units<sup>160</sup> and may very well have a long-term corrosive impact on the armed services. John Hillen of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a former Army officer who served in the Gulf War, observes, “I have yet to run into anybody who joined because they wanted to be a peacekeeper.”<sup>161</sup>

As they shrink the military’s role, policymakers should consider those attributes of military service that have for centuries led patriotic young people to risk all on behalf of their fellow citizens. That analysis requires a serious review of recruiting appeals, promotion practices, training programs, service education, military missions, and much more. The armed services might better emphasize how they are different from civil-

**Returning to a more traditional, restrained international role would reduce pressure on the American armed forces.**

**A related concern is the transformation of the military's mission from fighting wars to international social engineering.**

ian work—"the real meaning of military service and the intangible personal growth attributes intrinsic to it."<sup>162</sup> Obviously a market exists for tough service: the Marine Corps alone continues to enjoy recruiting success.

### **Other Policy Changes**

Micro, as well as macro, policy could improve the manpower picture of the armed services. The military is a tough life, especially for soldiers and their families stationed overseas. The Navy has been making a concerted effort to improve shipboard life; the early results seem positive, but there are obvious limits to such an approach.<sup>163</sup> Also, the uniqueness of the institution and mission requires special consideration when designing compensation and benefits.

Policymakers need to think creatively about how best to alleviate narrower grade and skill shortages. Charles Moskos suggests using shorter-term enlistments to draw in single soldiers interested in a little adventure.<sup>164</sup> His idea has merit. In interviews in focus groups, many young men objected to lengthy terms (four to five years) and the concomitant "interruption of life."<sup>165</sup> However, a downside of his proposal is that short-term tours increase military costs because turnover—and thus recruiting and training expenses—rises. In addition, military units are also disrupted by a loss of cohesion and increased costs. Thus, according to Army spokesman Lt. Col. Jamie Sullivan, "The problem is, it's not cost-effective."<sup>166</sup>

More use of civilians and lower standards for military recruits should be considered as a way of alleviating recruiting and retention pressures. Of course, both measures are controversial: Representative Buyer, who chairs the House National Security Committee's Subcommittee on Military Personnel, warns that the latter presents "a very costly and dangerous risk to military readiness that must be avoided."<sup>167</sup> Another proposal—with obvious counterarguments—comes from Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.), who suggests that some

roles in an increasingly high-tech force could be filled by people with one or more physical disabilities.<sup>168</sup>

Across-the-board pay hikes may also be justified, given the Pentagon's contention that soldiers are paid 13 percent less than civilians doing comparable work.<sup>169</sup> Conversely, some studies suggest that soldiers are not underpaid.<sup>170</sup> However, general raises would do little to solve the military's specific problems, such as low recruitment and pilot retention. For them, targeted approaches are more likely to be successful.<sup>171</sup>

To address the problem of retention, the administration has proposed a \$3 billion package: a 4.4 percent across-the-board hike, combined with greater increases for some midcareer officers and NCOs and a retirement raise.<sup>172</sup> However, pay and benefit raises like those need not require increases in the Pentagon's budget, whether the president's extra \$12.6 billion for the year 2000, Bill Kristol and Robert Kagan's desired extra \$60 billion to \$80 billion annually, or Frank Gaffney's incredible proposal for an extra \$100 billion a year.<sup>173</sup> Any pay and benefit increases could be financed through reductions in unnecessary bases, weapons, and force structure.<sup>174</sup> (A host of wasteful domestic programs, such as corporate welfare, should also be candidates for elimination.)<sup>175</sup>

Equally important, civilian society should speak well of the military and encourage military service. (A recent example is the effort of Janet Cohen, wife of the defense secretary, to boost soldiers' morale.)<sup>176</sup> Indeed, just as voters in some states look to community service—such as time spent in the volunteer fire department—as a criterion for election to office, so could voters consider service in the military. A willingness to join the armed forces should not be the only or the most important factor in choosing political leaders, but voters concerned about representativeness in the armed forces could treat military service as one indication of a candidate's commitment to the larger community.

## Conclusion

It is important never to forget that the military is a means to an end—not an end in itself. The purpose of America’s armed forces is to defend a free society built on respect for and protection of individual liberty. Ultimately, the preservation of liberty is the most important reason to reject conscription.

A draft would be costly, especially to the military. More basic, however, conscription would be incompatible with the government’s duty to protect the individual liber-

ty of the American people. A renewed draft would destroy the very values that it purports to save.

## Appendix

All the tables come from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Management Policy, *Population Representation in the Military Services Fiscal Year 1997* (Washington: U.S. Department of Defense, November 1998).

**Policymakers need to think creatively about how best to alleviate narrower grade and skill shortages.**

## Notes

1. Even so, many resisted compulsion, which helped turn the requirements into dead letters. See, for example, John O'Sullivan and Alan Meckler, "1607-1783: The Birth of the Citizen Soldier," in *The Draft and Its Enemies: A Documentary History*, ed. John O'Sullivan and Alan Meckler (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), pp. 3-9; and Marcus Cunliffe, *Soldiers and Civilians: The Martial Spirit in America 1775-1865* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1968), pp. 179-212.
2. Jack Franklin Leach, *Conscription in the United States: Historical Background* (Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle, 1952), p. 12.
3. The opposition was often violent in both contending states. See, for example, Iver Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); and Albert Burton Moore, *Conscription and Conflict in the Confederacy* (New York: Macmillan, 1924).
4. Leon Friedman, "Conscription and the Constitution: The Original Understanding," in *The Military Draft: Selected Readings on Conscription*, ed. Martin Anderson and Barbara Honegger (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1982), pp. 231-96; and Akhil Reed Amar, *The Bill of Rights* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 53-59.
5. For more on the history of conscription in America, see John Whiteclay Chambers, *To Raise an Army: The Draft Comes to America* (New York: Free Press, 1987); and Martin Anderson, *Conscription: A Select and Annotated Bibliography* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1976).
6. Citizen Advisory Panel on Military Manpower Procurement, *Report to the Committee on Armed Services*, prepared for the House Committee on Armed Services, 90th Cong., 1st sess., 1967, p. 18.
7. President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force, *The Report of the President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force* (Washington, Government Printing Office, February 1970).
8. See, for example, William Bowman et al., eds., *The All-Volunteer Force after a Decade: Retrospect and Prospect* (Washington: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1986); Robert Fullinwider, ed., *Conscripts and Volunteers: Military Requirements, Social Justice, and the All-Volunteer Force* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman & Allanheld, 1983); Anderson and Honegger; Martin Anderson, ed., *Registration and the Draft* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution, Press, 1982); Andrew Goodpaster et al., *Toward a Consensus on Military Service: Report of the Atlantic Council's Working Group on Military Service* (New York: Pergamon, 1982); and O'Sullivan and Meckler, "The Birth of the Citizen Soldier."
9. An administration task force put out a report on how to improve the armed services. Military Manpower Task Force, "A Report to the President on the Status and Prospects of the All-Volunteer Force," White House, Office of the President, October 1982.
10. See Doug Bandow, "The Volunteer Military: Better Than a Draft," Cato Institute Foreign Policy Briefing no. 6, January 8, 1991.
11. See, for example, Grant Willis, "Hill Is Warned that All-Volunteer Force at Crossroads," *Air Force Times*, May 17, 1993, p. 3; and Joe West, "Boles: Drawdown Discouraging Recruits Service Vitality Needs," *Air Force Times*, May 10, 1993, p. 22.
12. George Wilson, "Selective Draft Could Be Answer to the Shortfall," *Navy Times*, December 7, 1998, p. 31.
13. Ross Mackenzie, "What the Military Is Saving: Whose Values—Ours or Clinton's?" *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 29, 1998, p. A21.
14. V. H. Krulak, "Time to Revisit the Military Draft?" *San Diego Union-Tribune*, July 22, 1998.
15. Jim Cleaver, "Kleaver's Klippins: Here's a Solution That Might Make Some Sense," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, August 23, 1995.
16. Mark Shields, "When in Wartime," *Washington Post*, March 28, 1999, p. A27. Shields actually contends that the AVF disappeared when the Air Force issued a "stop-loss" order, temporarily halting retirement of pilots and aircraft support personnel during the Kosovo war. But men and women who volunteer know that this a condition of service. The armed forces exercise greater control over the lives of personnel than do private companies over their workers, but that fact merely reflects the unique nature of military service; it does not mean that such service is not voluntary.
17. Robert Maginnis, "Filling the Ranks," Family Research Council, Military Readiness Project, Washington, 1999, p. 15.
18. Doug Bandow, "National Service: The Enduring Panacea," Cato Institute Policy Analysis no. 130, March 22, 1990, p. 27.
19. Quoted in Ronald Shafer, "Feeling a Draft? Lawmakers Raise the Issue of Resuming

- Conscription," *Wall Street Journal*, October 2, 1998, p. A1.
20. Quoted in "Lawmakers Debate Reviving the Draft," unsigned editorial, *Dallas Morning News*, September 26, 1998.
21. Quoted in Sig Christenson, "Air Force at 20-Year Low in Recruiting Could Revive Draft," *Washington Times*, July 6, 1999, p. A1.
22. Philip Gold, *Evasions: The American Way of Military Service* (New York: Paragon House, 1985), p. 152.
23. Quoted in "Overheard," *Newsweek*, April 22, 1991, p. 19.
24. Emmanuel Jarry, "More Cuts in France's Military Scheduled," *Washington Times*, July 8, 1998, p. A13.
25. Philip Gold, "Viewpoint: Resuming Peacetime Conscription Bad Idea That Would Clog Courts," *News Tribune*, November 29, 1998, p. B13.
26. Quoted in Thomas Ricks and Carla Anne Robbins, "America Is Learning to Play World Cop, but Only Reluctantly," *Wall Street Journal*, May 21, 1998, p. A1.
27. Assistant Secretary of Defense, Office of Force Management Policy, *Population in the Military Services: Fiscal Year 1996* (Washington: U.S. Department of Defense, December 1997), p. 2-1; and George Wilson, "The All-Volunteer Force Is in Danger," *Air Force Times*, April 13, 1998, p. 62. For a detailed discussion of the relationship between the propensity to enlist and actual enlistment, see Jerald Bachman et al., "Does Enlistment Propensity Predict Accession? High School Seniors' Plans and Subsequent Behavior," *Armed Forces & Society* 25, no. 1 (Fall 1998): 59-80.
- By law the armed services can recruit anyone between the ages of 17 and 35 who meets minimal AFQT standards—a pool of 69 million. But, in practice 94 percent of recruits are under 25 and 82 percent are under 21. The armed services also unilaterally set much higher AFQT standards. By the time those in college and those with medically disqualifying conditions are discounted, the relevant pool runs about 2 million. Andrea Boyer and Edward Schmitz, "Socio-Demographics and Military Recruiting: The Role of Veterans," Paper presented at the conference of the International Military Testing Association, "Youth Attitudes toward Military Service in the Post-Cold War Era," San Antonio, Texas, 1996 (Defense Manpower Data Center Report No. 97-001), pp. K-1 through K-2.
28. Anita Lancaster and Jerry Lehnus, "Declining Interest in Military Service: Qualitative Insights," Paper presented at "Youth Attitudes toward Military Service," p. A-1.
29. Wilson, "Selective Draft Could Be Answer."
30. Ernest Blazar, "Trouble Ahead," *Washington Times*, January 27, 1999, p. A10.
31. See the testimony of Francis Rush, Statement at Hearing on Recruiting Issues: Subcommittee on Military Personnel of the House National Security Committee, 106th Cong., 1st sess., March 18, 1999, p. 6.
32. "Being All They Can Be?" *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*, March 12, 1999, transcript, p. 3.
33. Quoted in Brian Mitchell, "Air Force Heads for Bumpy Flight," *Investor's Business Daily*, September 25, 1998, pp. A1, A28.
34. Dave Moniz, "Skilled Workers Bailing Out of Military in Doves," *The State* (Columbia, S.C.), October 2, 1998, p. A10.
35. Steven Lee Myers, "Good Times Mean Hard Sell for the Military," *New York Times*, November 3, 1998, p. A19. For complete recruiting results, see Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, "Fiscal Year 1998 Recruiting Achieves 97 Percent of Goal for Quantity while Exceeding Quality Benchmarks," News release, no. 559-98, U. S. Department of Defense, October 28, 1998.
36. Quoted in James Crawley, "Shortage of Sailors Erodes Navy's Readiness for Combat," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, September 2, 1998, p. A1.
37. Quoted in Steven Komarow, "As Iraq Looms, Shortfalls Hastening Downward Slide," *USA Today*, November 10, 1998, p. 1A.
38. Quoted in Ernest Blazar, "Inside the Ring," *Washington Times*, December 2, 1998, p. A10.
39. See, for example, Ernest Blazar, "Inside the Ring," April 6, 1999, p. A8.
40. Patrick Pexton, "Dwindling Ranks," *Washington Post*, September 24, 1998, p. A25.
41. Bradley Graham and Eric Pianin, "Military Readiness, Morale Show Strain," *Washington Post*, August 13, 1998, p. A28. See also Ernest Blazar, "Willing and Able—But Ready?" *Washington Times*, October 4, 1998, pp. A1, A6.
42. Ricks and Robbins, p. A6.

43. Mitchell, "Air Force Heads for Bumpy Flight," p. A1; Rowan Scarborough, "Airline Pay Lures Military Pilots Bored by Peacekeeping," *Washington Times*, October 4, 1998, p. A6; Bradley Graham, "Strains on Many Fronts Drive Pilots from the Skies, Airmen Say," *Washington Post*, August 13, 1998, p. A29; Rowan Scarborough, "Military Is Subpar, Lott Tells President," *Washington Times*, July 2, 1998, pp. A1, A11; and Philip Shenon, "Top Guns Quitting for Life at Cruising Altitude," *New York Times*, October 22, 1997, p. A14. Air Force personnel have also made that argument directly. See, for example, Tom Henwood, "Payback for Military Service," Letter to the editor, *Washington Post*, March 20, 1999, p. A17.
44. Rowan Scarborough, "Navy Secretary Seeks Way to Boost Morale," *Washington Times*, January 1, 1999, pp. A1, A9.
45. Pexton, p. A25.
46. Quoted in Moniz, "Skilled Workers Bailing Out," p. A10.
47. Ibid.
48. Chris Hedges, "Studying Bosnia's U.S. 'Prisoners of Peace,'" *New York Times*, March 30, 1997, p. 11.
49. New enlistees are still less likely to be married than their civilian counterparts. However, the percentage of married personnel in the military has risen from 43 percent in 1974 to more than 50 percent today. Assistant Secretary of Defense, Office of Force Management Policy, *Population Representation in the Military Services: Fiscal Year 1997* (Washington: U.S. Department of Defense, November 1998), p. v. The mean age of servicemen has risen by more than two years since the inauguration of the AVF. *Idem*, p. 3-2.
50. Quoted in Ricks and Robbins, p. A1.
51. Myers, "Good Times," p. A19.
52. Wilson, "Selective Draft Could Be Answer," p. 31.
53. Joseph Califano, "When There's No Draft," *Washington Post*, April 6, 1999, p. A23.
54. Jacob Weisberg, "Bombs and Blockbusters," *New York Times Magazine*, April 11, 1999, p. 18.
55. Thomas Ricks, "The Widening Gap between the Military and Society," *Atlantic Monthly*, July 1997, electronic version.
56. "Time to Reconsider Compulsory Service," *Army Times*, January 25, 1999, p. 44.
57. Quoted in "Lawmakers Debate Reviving the Draft."
58. Quoted in Thomas Lippman, "Socially and Politically, Nation Feels the Absence of a Draft," *Washington Post*, September 8, 1998, p. A13.
59. Wilson, "Selective Draft Could Be Answer," p. 31.
60. "Time to Reconsider," p. 44.
61. Cleaver, "Kleaver's Klippings."
62. See, for example, Pat Towell, "Is Military's 'Warrior' Culture in America's Best Interest?" *Congressional Quarterly Weekly*, January 2, 1999, pp. 25-28; Ricks, "Widening Gap," pp. 66-78; and Richard Kaplan, "Fort Leavenworth and the Eclipse of Nationhood," *Atlantic Monthly*, September 1996, pp. 74-90.
63. Mackenzie, p. A21.
64. Quoted in Lippman, p. A13.
65. Doug Bandow, "An Involuntary Military: Paying More for Less," in *The Anthrope Factor in Warfare: Conscripts, Volunteers, and Reserves* (Washington: National Defense University, 1987), pp. 245-86.
66. Quoted in Myers, "Good Times," p. A19. See also Moniz, p. A10.
67. Evan Gaddis, Statement at Hearing on Recruiting Issues, Subcommittee on Military Personnel of the House National Security Committee, 106th Cong., 1st sess., March 18, 1999, p. 3.
68. Richard Newman, "Dumbing Down the Military," *U.S. News & World Report*, November 23, 1998, p. 22.
69. Brian Mitchell, "Is the Draft in Your Future?" *Investor's Business Daily*, February 19, 1999, p. A1.
70. U. S. Army, Office of Public Affairs, Press briefing, March 4, 1997, p. 25.
71. Assistant Secretary of Defense, *Population Representation in Fiscal Year 1997*, p. D-14. Thomas Ricks, in some ways a critic of the AVF, observes, "The result of [the services'] selectivity is that the military is now far better educated than the general population." Ricks, "The Widening Gap."
72. Gordon Sullivan, "Washington Tightwads Are Creating a Hollow Military," *Wall Street Journal*,

September 22, 1998, p. A22.

73. Cited in William Matthews, "Little Enthusiasm for Return of Draft," *Army Times*, January 25, 1999, p. 14.

74. Quoted in Mitchell, "Is the Draft in Your Future?" p. A1.

75. Assistant Secretary of Defense, *Population Representation in Fiscal Year 1997*, p. 9-2. See also Rush, p. 16.

76. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

77. The recent rise in attrition has caused the General Accounting Office to suggest that the Pentagon may be too ready to discharge soldiers for minor causes. See Rowan Scarborough, "Military's Early Discharge Rate Soars," *Washington Times*, August 13, 1998, pp. A1, A11.

78. For a discussion of the benefit of "firing" unsuitable soldiers, see Bandow, "An Involuntary Military," pp. 264-65. Similarly, the AVF can be more liberal in discharging recruits for health problems. See, for example, Rick Maze, "Failure Rate for Recruits Is Climbing," *Air Force Times*, April 24, 1995, p. 3. To do the same for conscripts would encourage the recreation of an entire industry for manufacturing false health ailments.

79. Bandow, "An Involuntary Military," p. 269.

80. James Hosek et al., "Active Enlisted Supply: Prospects and Policy Options," in Bowman et al., p. 197.

81. Assistant Secretary of Defense, *Population Representation in Fiscal Year 1997*, p. 3-2.

82. Rush, p. 16.

83. See, for example, C. Robert Roll and John T. Warner, "The Enlisted Career Manpower in the All-Volunteer Force," in Bowman et al., pp. 60-71.

84. Quoted in Mitchell, "Air Force Heads for Bumpy Flight," p. A28. See also John Diamond, "Pilots Flying Away from Military," *Washington Times*, March 24, 1998, pp. B7, B8.

85. Quoted in Ricks and Robbins, p. A6. Maj. Gen. Evan Gaddis put it more delicately when he told a congressional subcommittee, "Because the scope of Army operations has changed and continues to change since the breakup of the Soviet Union, deployments involve a variety of humanitarian and peace keeping missions with special requirements for each situation. As a result, soldiers must also be sensitive to their environment and capable of working with a variety of people. The

requirement for highly strenuous physical activity will remain as well. In short, the future will require a multifunctional, full-spectrum soldier." Evan Gaddis, Statement at Hearing on Recruiting Issues, Subcommittee on Military Personnel of the House National Security Committee, 106th Cong., 1st sess., March 18, 1999, pp. 3-4.

86. Ronald Halverson and Paul Bliese, "Determinants of Soldier Support for 'Operation Uphold Democracy,'" *Armed Forces and Society* 23, no. 1 (Fall 1996): 84-85, 93-94.

87. Quoted in Ricks and Robbins, p. A1.

88. Dave Moniz, "More Youths Tell Uncle Sam: 'I Don't Want You'; Army Recruitment Drops, Forcing Sergeant Soto to Go Door to Door," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 24, 1997, p. 1.

89. Jerry Lehnus and Anita Lancaster, "Declining Interest in Military Service: Quantitative Observations," Paper presented at "Youth Attitudes toward Military Service," p. B-3. That decline did not reflect a fear of danger, per se, because the collapse of the Soviet Union also generated a small negative effect on men's likelihood to enlist. Randy Shepard, "Post-Cold War Propensity Trends—A Marketing Assessment," Paper presented at "Youth Attitudes toward Military Service," p. H-9. Early indications are that the Kosovo war didn't even offer the temporary recruiting uptick generated by the Persian Gulf War. See Diana Jean Schemo, "Kosovo War Doesn't Do Much for U.S. Recruitment," *New York Times*, May 16, 1999, p. Wk 6.

90. Lancaster and Lehnus, p. A-3.

91. *Ibid.*, p. A-6.

92. *Ibid.*, p. A-4.

93. Military Manpower Task Force, "Report to the President," pp. A-7, A-6.

94. Syllogistics, Inc., "The Differential Budget Costs of Conscription-Based Alternatives to the All-Volunteer Force," July 23, 1986; David Armor, Statement before the Subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, March 24, 1987. See also, General Accounting Office, *Military Draft: Potential Impacts and Other Issues*, GAO-NSIAD-88-102 (Washington: General Accounting Office, March 1988).

95. Syllogistics, pp. 7-2 through 7-3.

96. Richard Danzig, "Dinner Speech," in Anderson, *Registration and the Draft*, p. 110.

97. Kenneth J. Coffey, *The Strategic Implications of the*

*All-Volunteer Force: The Conventional Defense of Central Europe* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), pp. 167–79.

98. Quoted in R. J. Q. Adams and Philip Poirier, *The Conscription Controversy in Great Britain 1900–18* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1987), p. 223.

99. James Wadsworth, “We Must Suspend Many Rights and Privileges,” in Anderson and Honegger, pp. 543–44.

100. That argument has been made since the creation of the AVF. See, for example, James Fallows, “The Civilianization of the Army,” *Atlantic Monthly*, April 1981, pp. 98–108.

101. Assistant Secretary of Defense, *Population Representation in Fiscal Year 1997*, pp. iii–viii. Earlier surveys reached the same conclusion. See Bandow, “An Involuntary Military,” pp. 258–59.

102. Martin Binkin, *America’s Volunteer Army: Progress and Prospects* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1984), p. 22.

103. Sue Berryman, *Who Serves? The Persistent Myth of the Underclass Army* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1988), p. 4. Berryman’s emphasis.

104. Assistant Secretary of Defense, *Population Representation in Fiscal Year 1997*, pp. 7-1 through 7-2.

105. In contrast, in some years during the mid-1950s and mid-1960s, the Pentagon’s accession requirements ran more than 50 percent of the pool of 18-year-old males. See Assistant Secretary of Defense, *Population Representation in Fiscal Year 1997*, p. D-1.

106. “Draft Men and Women,” unsigned editorial, *Austin American-Statesman*, December 11, 1995, p. A8.

107. There will always be volunteers. In debates over draft registration, even the Pentagon accepted a base line of 8,000 volunteers a month—the average in 1965 during the buildup in the Vietnam War. Military Manpower Task Force, “Draft Registration,” Draft report, October 26, 1981, pp. L1 through L2. However, since renewed conscription would take fewer people, it would probably generate fewer “draft-induced” volunteers—those who join instead of being conscripted in order to choose the form or time of service.

108. Wilson and Murtha envision a highly selective process that would be more likely to take brighter kids. Wilson, “Selective Draft Could Be

Answer,” p. 31. Such a system would obviously be unfair. It would also create perverse incentives for young men (and women, in the case of Wilson) intent on avoiding conscription. One tactic would be to “tank” the relevant aptitude tests. And, as noted earlier, on average, volunteers are brighter than draftees—so even a Wilson-Murtha-style draft would not change the composition of the force.

109. Califano, p. A23.

110. Walter Shapiro, “Onetime Dove Finds Himself Flying with Hawks Later in Life,” *USA Today*, March 31, 1999, p. 12A.

111. Cited in Lippman, p. A13.

112. John Steward Ambler, *The French Army in Politics: 1945–1962* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1966).

113. Doug Bandow, “The Volunteer Military,” p. 9.

114. See, for example, Terrance Cullinan, “The Courage to Compel,” in Anderson and Honegger, pp. 445–60; and Pete McCloskey, “Argument for National Service,” in Anderson, *Registration and the Draft*, pp. 173–78.

Today even onetime advocates of a national service draft are pitching voluntary initiatives. Charles Moskos, *A Call to Civic Service: National Service for Country and Community* (New York: Free Press, 1988). However, after publication of that book Moskos allowed that “if I could have a magic wand, I would be for a compulsory system.” Quoted in Jacob Lamar, “Enlisting with Uncle Sam,” *Time*, February 23, 1987, p. 30. More recently Moskos declared that conscription might not be politically feasible but that “philosophically it’s a good concept,” *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*, p. 11.

115. Ricks, “The Widening Gap.”

116. Steven Waldman, “Nationalize National Service,” *Blueprint* (Spring 1999): 20.

117. Advocates of national service have long offered lengthy lists of “unmet social needs” that could be fulfilled by such conscripts. See, for example, Richard Danzig and Peter Szanton, *National Service: What Would It Mean?* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1986), pp. 40–41. But numbers of needs are worthless since they do not consider the opportunity cost of such “service”—that is, the value of the activities necessarily forgone by drafting millions of people into whatever activities a majority in Congress happens to favor at any particular point in time. If cost is no object, there is no limit to the num-

ber of “unmet social needs.”

118. Doug Bandow, “National Service: Utopias Revisited,” *Cato Institute Policy Analysis* no. 190, March 15, 1993; and Bandow “The Enduring Panacea.” The proceedings of a conference on those and related issues were published in Williamson Evers, ed., *National Service: Pro & Con* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution, 1990). None of the international programs commonly cited offers an equivalent model for a universal system in the United States. See Donald Eberly and Michael Sherraden, eds., *The Moral Equivalent of War? A Study of Non-military Service in Nine Nations* (New York: Greenwood, 1990).

119. Gold, *Evasions*, p. 151.

120. Gary Anderson, “Timely Wake-Up Call for the Military?” *Washington Times*, September 26, 1998, p. C3.

121. Doug Bandow, “Unnecessary and Un-American,” *Orbis* 34, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 371–84; and Doug Bandow, “Rejoinder: A Bad Deal, a Flawed Ideal,” *Orbis* (Summer 1990): 392–97.

122. Shepard, p. H-9. See also Doug Bandow, “Military Service Muddle,” *Washington Times*, June 19, 1998, p. A18.

123. Rarely is the appropriateness of conscription in wartime debated. Yet it is not obvious that a government that lacks the moral authority to call forth its people voluntarily in its defense has the moral legitimacy to force them into uniform. See Doug Bandow, “No Circumstance Can Justify Another Draft,” *Orange County Register*, July 20, 1980, p. J7.

Moreover, the United States, at least, has been spared having to choose between national survival and individual freedom. The Civil War involved the maintenance of political union, not national independence; the United States had no serious interest at stake in World War I (protecting the right of Americans to travel through a war zone on armed merchantmen of a belligerent power was simply ridiculous); the wars in Korea and Vietnam were over peripheral, not vital, U.S. interests. Only World War II involved a potential hegemonic threat. The flood of enlistments in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor suggests that Washington could have pursued a Japan-first strategy by relying on volunteers. Moreover, conflicts involving mass armies seem less likely in the future.

124. Michael Mandelbaum, “Foreign Policy as Social Work,” *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 1 (January–February 1996): 16–32.

125. A separate but similarly powerful argument against the frivolous use of the military is that such deployments degrade the fighting capability of combat units—making it less likely that the armed forces could carry out a primary war-fighting mission in an emergency. Such problems are widely apparent. Komarow, p. A1; Graham and Pianin, p. A28; and Bradley Graham, “Army to Shift Bosnia Duties,” *Washington Post*, April 17, 1998, p. A28.

126. James Stokesbury, “The U.S. Army and Coalition Warfare, 1941–1945,” in *Against All Enemies: Interpretations of American Military History from Colonial Times to the Present*, ed. Kenneth Hagan and William Roberts (New York: Greenwood, 1986), p. 279.

127. Gold, “Viewpoint,” p. B13.

128. For a discussion of the ongoing internecine struggle in the Department of Defense over which service will become the nation’s “key expeditionary force,” see Robert Holzer, “U.S. Services Battle for Lead in Expeditionary Missions,” *Defense News*, November 30–December 6, 1998, p. 8.

129. For an explication of this argument for East Asia, see Doug Bandow, “New Wine in Old Bottles: The Pentagon’s East Asia Security Strategy Report,” *Cato Institute Policy Analysis* no. 344, May 18, 1999. For the argument as it pertains to Europe, see Ted Galen Carpenter, *Beyond NATO: Staying Out of Europe’s Wars* (Washington: Cato Institute, 1994), pp. 29–43.

130. Said during a conference discussion. No transcript.

131. Ambler, pp. 106, 345.

132. Doug Bandow, “Draft Registration: The Politics of Institutional Immortality,” *Cato Institute Policy Analysis* no. 214, August 15, 1994. For more general information, see Doug Bandow, “Replace Registration with the Reserve Volunteer Force,” in *The Anthro Factor in Warfare*, pp. 321–60; Doug Bandow, “Draft Registration: It’s Time to Repeal Carter’s Final Legacy,” *Cato Institute Policy Analysis* no. 86, May 7, 1987. Even during the Cold War, the Reagan administration acknowledged that there were alternatives to registration. Military Manpower Task Force, “A Report to the President on Selective Service Registration,” December 15, 1981.

133. Quoted in Crawley, p. A1.

134. Good economic times have had a particularly dramatic impact on the propensity to enlist of minority youth. Jonathan Landay, “Fewer Blacks

- Desire Military Career: Higher Incomes and Lure of Private-Sector Jobs Are Main Reasons," *Christian Science Monitor*, June 3, 1996, p. 1. The recognition that the United States faces no serious security threat akin to that posed by hegemonic communism may also reduce the perceived value of military service. Rear Adm. B. E. McGann, commander of the Navy Recruiting Command, argues, "The recent environment of defense cut-backs and downsizing has left many with the mistaken belief that Navy has stopped, or greatly reduced, hiring young men and women into our enlisted and officer ranks." B. E. McGann, Statement at Hearing on Recruiting Issues, Subcommittee on Military Personnel of the House National Security Committee, 106th Cong., 1st sess., March 18, 1999, p. 1.
135. Garry Parks, Statement at Hearing on Recruiting Issues, Subcommittee on Military Personnel of the House National Security Committee, 106th Cong., 1st sess., March 18, 1999, p. 2.
136. Assistant Secretary of Defense, *Population Representation in Fiscal Year 1996*, p. 8-1.
137. Quoted in "Nation Must Act to Shore Up Badly Depleted Armed Services," unsigned editorial, *Tampa Tribune*, September 21, 1998.
138. Gold, "Viewpoint," p. B13.
139. Quoted in George Coryell, "Military Readiness; Strategic Plan Tests U.S. Forces," *Tampa Tribune*, March 7, 1999, p. C1.
140. In the fall of 1998, former speaker of the house Newt Gingrich claimed, "The world is a dangerous place and new threats to the United States emerge each day." "Speaker: Defense Spending Bill Addresses Key Quality of Life and Readiness Issues," Press Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, October 6, 1998, p. 2. Actually, America's dominance grows each day. The latest Quadrennial Defense Review failed to account for the dramatic change in the international threat environment. David Isenberg, "The Quadrennial Defense Review: Reiterating the Tired Status Quo," Cato Institute Policy Analysis no. 317, September 17, 1998. Perhaps the most threatening adversary is North Korea, but it is vastly overmatched by the Republic of Korea (not to mention the United States). Doug Bandow, *Tripwire: Korea and U.S. Foreign Policy in a Changed World* (Washington: Cato Institute, 1996).
141. Doug Bandow, "Keep the Troops and the Money at Home," *Orbis* 35, no. 4 (Fall 1991): 549-61.
142. Albright is quoted in Ricks and Robbins, p. A1.
143. Wilson, "Selective Draft Could Be Answer," p. 31. Rep. Walter Jones (R-N.C.), a member of the National Security Committee, does suggest no longer misusing the military "on missions that have little or no direct bearing on our national security." Walter Jones, "Our Declining Military Needs Help before It's Too Late," *Washington Times*, October 28, 1998, p. A20. Other political leaders also recognize the connection; however, they do not advocate reducing commitments. For instance, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott complained that cuts in defense spending "have not been balanced out with a similar reduction in the number of missions and deployments." Quoted in Scarborough, "Military Is Subpar," p. A1.
144. Quoted in Douglas Gillert, "Secretary, Senator Call for More Defense Dollars," U.S. Department of Defense, October 23, 1998, www.defenselink.mil.
145. Sullivan, p. A22.
146. George Tenet, Statement at Hearing on Current and Projected National Security Threats, Senate Committee on Armed Services, 106th Cong., 1st sess., February 2, 1999.
147. Dan Quayle, "The Duty to Lead: America's National Security Imperative," Heritage Foundation, Heritage Lectures no. 630, January 21, 1999.
148. Maginnis, p. 1.
149. For a detailed analysis, see Ivan Eland, "Tilting at Windmills: Post-Cold War Military Threats to U.S. Security," Cato Institute Policy Analysis no. 332, February 8, 1999; and Ivan Eland, "The Cold War's Over, So Let's Go Home," *Air Force Times*, August 3, 1998, p. 31.
150. See Ivan Eland, "Protecting the Homeland: The Best Defense Is to Give No Offense," Cato Institute Policy Analysis no. 306, May 5, 1998; and "Does U.S. Intervention Overseas Breed Terrorism? The Historical Record," Cato Institute Foreign Policy Briefing no. 50, December 17, 1998.
151. Quoted in Ricks and Robbins, p. A6.
152. Thomas Ricks, "The Great Society in Camouflage," *Atlantic Monthly*, December 1996, electronic version.
153. Carl Quintanilla, "Getting Ahead: About Face: To Land Jobs, Veterans Act Civilian," *Wall Street Journal*, September 15, 1998, p. B1.
154. Lancaster and Lehnus. The propensity for

young women to enlist, however, fell from 14 percent in 1996 to 12 percent in 1997. Assistant Secretary of Defense, *Population Representation in Fiscal Year 1997*, p. 2-1.

155. Quoted in Mitchell, "Is the Draft in Your Future?" p. A22.

156. This issue is not just an American concern. Clashes between military and civilian cultures have been evident in other democracies, such as France. See Ambler, pp. 277-307. The armed services' apparent shift from institutional to occupational models has also been observed throughout Europe. See Charles Moskos and Frank Wood, eds., *The Military: More Than Just a Job?* (Washington: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1988), pp. 153-275.

157. William Moore, "The Military Must Revive Its Warrior Spirit," *Wall Street Journal*, October 27, 1988, p. A22.

158. Moskos and Wood, pp. 153-275.

159. Fallows, p. 98.

160. Gary Dempsey, "No: U.S. Military Readiness Is Being Weakened by Efforts to Support a Fictional Nation," *Insight*, January 11-18, 1999, pp. 25, 27; and Gary Dempsey, "Defense Danger," *Daily Oklahoman*, December 28, 1998.

161. Quoted in Mitchell, "Is the Draft in Your Future?" p. A22.

162. Shepard, p. H-12.

163. Richard Newman, "The Navy Tries a Little Shipboard Tenderness," *U.S. News & World Report*, March 22, 1999, p. 26.

164. Charles Moskos, "Short-Term Soldiers," *Washington Post*, March 8, 1999, p. A-19. One problem with his argument is that he suggests foreign peacekeeping would be seen as "a rewarding way" of serving. Yet potential male recruits indicate that it is a major disincentive to enlisting.

165. Lancaster and Lehnus, p. A-2.

166. Quoted in Bradley Graham, "Short-Term Remedy for Recruiters?" *Washington Post*, March 18, 1999, p. A19.

167. Steve Buyer, "Chairman Buyer Opening Statement Recruiting Hearing," Press release, Office of Congressman Buyer, March 18, 1999, p. 2.

168. Gerry Braun, "Hunter Sees Military Potential in Disabled," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, February 20, 1999, pp. A1, A18. Criticisms of that proposal

are given in Paul Craig Roberts, "The 'Can-Do' Curse . . . and Fade Out," *Washington Times*, March 18, 1999, p. A18.

169. Komarow, p. A1; William Matthews, "Pay Reform Pushed as Retention Tool," *Air Force Times*, November 16, 1998, p. 3. The military also points to the fact that 25,000 service families receive food stamps. Rowan Scarborough, "Cohen Makes Benefits, Pay for Troops a Priority," *Washington Times*, October 28, 1998, p. A1.

170. See, for example, Tobias Naegele, "The Pay Gap: Most Enlisted People Are Earning More Than Civilians, a New Study Says," *Air Force Times*, November 9, 1998, p. 3. Of course, the peculiar demands placed on military personnel make all such comparisons difficult. One army recruiting sergeant observes, "We are asking today's youth to leave home, deploy at a moment's notice and give his life for his country for the same pay as a fry cook." Myers, "Good Times," p. A19. And there is substantial disagreement over the impact of some proposals, such as the one to increase pension benefits. Judith Havemann, "Waging War on Military Attrition Could Be Costly," *Washington Post*, December 23, 1998, p. A21.

171. Some proposals are offered by Business Executives for National Security, "Military Compensation: It's about More Than Money," BENS Tail-to-Tooth Update, no. 27, January 25, 1999.

172. See Pat Towell, "Proposed Military Pay Increase Aimed at Making Services More Attractive," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly*, January 9, 1999, p. 72; and Judith Haveman, "4.4% Military Pay Hike Asked," *Washington Post*, December 22, 1998, p. A21.

173. The Republican Congress seems likely to end up approving more than the administration's proposed increase but less than that advocated by Kristol, Kagan, or Gaffney. House Armed Services Committee, "The FY2000 Defense Budget: Gambling with America's Defense," *National Security Report* 3, no. 1 (February 1999). See also William Kristol and Robert Kagan, "Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* (July-August 1996); and Frank J. Gaffney Jr., "Pro & Con: The Bottom Line: Defense Needs More Money," May 29, 1997, [www.intellectualcapital.com/issues/issue90/item2146.a](http://www.intellectualcapital.com/issues/issue90/item2146.a).

Actually, no hike is justified. The military has not been "starving," as columnist Don Feder, among others, suggests. Don Feder, "Defining Defense Dangers," *Washington Times*, October 2, 1998, p. A18. In fact, in inflation-adjusted terms, the military is spending as much as it did in 1980, at the height of the Cold War. Walter Jones com-

plains, "To put it simply, the U.S. military that won the Cold War and the Gulf war no longer exists." Jones, p. A20. But the Cold War is over.

The argument that American defense expenditures as a percentage of GDP are the lowest since the 1930s—made by GOP presidential contenders Steve Forbes and Dan Quayle—is irrelevant. The U.S. economy is bigger and American defense outlays are far higher than in the 1930s. This nation's military is larger and more powerful than any other on earth. Moreover, the most important determinant of defense outlays, as Ronald Reagan often pointed out, should be the nature of the threat. Dan Quayle complains, "After the Cold War, it made sense to reevaluate national security priorities. But the only discernible theme in the past six years has been cuts, cuts, and more cuts." Quayle, p. 4. What, however, should the theme be after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Warsaw Pact, and the international communist movement, which prompted Ronald Reagan to undertake his military buildup? Repeal of that buildup should be

only the first small step to a new, much leaner military. Even a hawk like John Lehman argues that serious military reform instead of more money is the appropriate answer. John Lehman, "Our Military Condition," *American Spectator*, October 1998, pp. 24–32.

174. Even moderate hawks oppose the large military spending increases proposed by Democrats and Republicans alike. See, for example, Michael O'Hanlon, "How Much Military?" *New York Times*, January 6, 1999, p. A27.

175. Rep. Solomon Ortiz (D-Tex.) suggests using the budget surplus to finance military pay increases instead of tax cuts. Crawley, p. A1. Anyone who picks up a copy of the federal budget, however, sees endless targets for serious budget cutters.

176. Elizabeth Becker, "'Two for America' Beat the Drums for the Military," *New York Times*, March 21, 1999, p. 21.

Published by the Cato Institute, Policy Analysis is a regular series evaluating government policies and offering proposals for reform. Nothing in Policy Analysis should be construed as necessarily reflecting the views of the Cato Institute or as an attempt to aid or hinder the passage of any bill before congress. Contact the Cato Institute for reprint permission. Additional copies of Policy Analysis are \$6.00 each (\$3.00 each for five or more). To order, or for a complete listing of available studies, write the Cato Institute, 1000 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001, call toll free 1-800-767-1241 (noon - 9 p.m. eastern time), fax (202) 842-3490, or visit our website at [www.cato.org](http://www.cato.org).