

Chronological: 25th Infantry Division Reunion, Schofield Barracks, "Draft"

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news from

Senator DANIEL K. INOUE

topic: SPEECH BY SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUE to the 25th Infantry Division Reunion, Schofield Barracks "DRAFT"

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There is an issue pending before the Congress which concerns me greatly. It is one which has been before our nation on a number of occasions during its 200 year history. It is a highly emotional issue, a moral issue and one which finds strong proponents and equally strong opponents. Despite its long history it is an issue which I am still pondering. Frankly, I have not made up my mind.

I am referring to the issue of the draft -- compulsory military service. Some eight bills to reinstitute the draft are now pending before the Congress.

Why is this now a pressing problem during a time of peace and relative prosperity? What is at stake?

In responding to these questions I would like to share with you some observations concerning our present All Volunteer Force to help us to determine whether it is living up to our expectations and our needs.

I note your theme for your convention is "The Past Looks at the Present and the Future". We represent the past to a large extent insofar as military duty is concerned. More importantly, however, we are responsible not only for the present but for planning our nation's future military defense as well. This is, as it has been throughout our history, one of our prime responsibilities as citizens and as leaders in a democratic republic. It is one which cannot be taken lightly if our free nation is to survive. We must face the facts.

It is interesting to note that although our country is now some 200 years old, we have had compulsory military service only during some 35 years of our history. In fact, many immigrants sought our shores as a means of escaping the draft in their own European country during the 19th and early 20th Century. We have prided ourselves on being a nation of citizen soldiers from the day of the minutemen to the present.

Conscription was utilized during the Civil War but it included a bounty system which permitted individuals to avoid military service. The draft was reinstated during World War I for a period of two years

and again during World War II from 1940 to 1946. After a lapse of two years, and with the pressures of the Cold War, the draft was reinstated in 1948 and continued in effect through June 1973. The decision to discontinue selective service at that time grew out of a disenchantment with the war in Vietnam coupled with the traditional antipathy to compulsory military service. I supported ending the draft and the establishment of the All Volunteer Force at that time.

Since the expiration of the draft in July of 1973, there have been far-reaching changes. Service in the military is not what we old-timers experienced. Many of you, undoubtedly, are aware of some of the changes. Permit me to cite a few examples.

Since our nation converted to an All Volunteer Force, there has been a significant increase in the number of dependents of our enlisted personnel. Between 1971 and 1977, there has been a 60 percent increase in the number of married junior enlisted personnel. For every 100 military personnel, we now have more than 50 dependents. The greatest overall increase in the proportion of enlisted personnel with dependents has been in the Army where the E-4s and E-5s with dependents have increased more than 60 percent. This is an enormous logistical burden for any Army to carry around, particularly, if those dependents are co-located with our front line troops, as they are in Europe. We may, with this co-location of dependents, have a happy fighting force, but do we have one fully prepared for combat? For example, in West Germany alone, we have 175,000 American dependents. Coping with the evacuation of this number of dependents in the event the balloon goes up in NATO is mind boggling to contemplate. Clearly, this dependent situation is a significant problem to our military -- one which has gotten out of control. As much as everyone loves to have one's dependents nearby, an Army of dependents requiring evacuation in an emergency, significantly inhibits military preparedness. We simply cannot have it both ways. This is a significant problem, and I do not underestimate its effect on the morale of our servicemen and women.

With a shift to the All Volunteer Force, it was recognized that pay, reenlistment bonuses, housing availability and other perquisites had to be increased if we were going to secure the necessary recruits. This has been done at a very considerable cost. A February 1978 GAO study placed those costs at an accumulated \$18.4 billion for the past five years but DOD estimates place the annual cost at between \$250 million and \$2.5 billion depending on various assumptions and inclusions.

Let's turn now to the personnel our Armed Forces are enlisting. The Chairman of the Subcommittee on Military Manpower, Senator Sam Nunn, a well-respected colleague of mine, had this to say about our All Volunteer Force: "The All Volunteer Force structure cannot be sustained much longer and we've got to do something about it. It is now on the ragged edge of viability, with mushrooming recruiting costs,

unacceptable rates of attrition, severe shortages of critical skills, especially those of doctors, shortages in qualified recruits and dangerously undermanned, lower quality reserves. As currently constituted, the All Volunteer Force will not work in the future."

I would like to examine some of these issues with you further. I have examined the two years prior to the end of the draft and the two years following the draft. The number of high school graduates remained essentially the same. Just this month, the Army relaxed the pre-requisite mandating a high school degree in order to meet its goal. There has been a slight improvement in the intelligence level of our new enlistees. In the years 1971 and 1972 we were taking in approximately one-fifth of the lower mental Category, Group IV. Now, we are taking about 5 percent of this group into our military services. Despite this improvement, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the military to fill its quotas in those schools requiring particular types of skills. Of particular concern is the shortage of doctors in our military. The number of active duty personnel per physician is higher than either the pre-Vietnam peacetime levels or the Vietnam wartime levels. Also lagging are those with linguistic, electronic and communications specialties.

Court martials, non-judicial punishments and even the desertion rates have ironically increased under the All Volunteer Force system. This is so, in spite of the fact that there has been an enormously high attrition rate for non-prior service enlistees.

This aspect especially concerns me, as it should you, because it invalidates the statistics that the All Volunteer proponents produce. What good are the enlistment statistics if 40 percent of the personnel are released before the ball game is over? Releasing a man from a contract -- any contract -- sets a dangerous precedent, particularly when it involves a commitment to national security. Attrition in today's military basically means voiding a contract. What industry would tolerate a personnel manager who permits an attrition rate of 40 percent?

This attrition rate reflects a high percentage of the military enlistees being separated prior to the completion of their first term. Currently, for example, in the Army, it is four out of every ten soldiers; for the Air Force, it is more than one out of every five personnel who are separated before completion of their initial enlistment contract. This high rate of first term enlistment attrition reflects poor recruiting practices; the inability of our young service personnel to adapt; as well as the services' desire to eliminate disciplinary problems.

We can look at this same problem from another aspect. Overall, the military services have recruited 400,000 non-prior service youths each year at a recruiting cost in excess of \$500 million annually. As many as 42 percent of those volunteers were discharged or released

before completing their first enlistment. The majority leave because they just cannot meet existing performance standards or minimal behavior requirements. The result is higher costs. The Navy, for example, says each recruit dropout represents a \$7,000-plus loss. If the young sailor has served for three years and been through advanced schooling, the costs jump to \$300,000.

If we calculate a 42 percent attrition rate from a 400,000 enlistment total, using the Navy's figures on cost, this means a loss of \$2 billion annually as a result of this high attrition.

Let me give you another example. Just last month (June), the Army announced that it has increased the reenlistment bonus by \$500 -- from \$2,500 to \$3,000 -- for some of our most basic skills such as infantry and armor to some of our most sophisticated skills such as electronic warfare specialists as well as Russian and Korean linguists. Where does it stop? How is the Pentagon going to apply the brakes to curtail the future cost increases for enlistment inducements and recruiting? We are, unfortunately, paying more but receiving far less.

Permit me to turn now to an aspect that may seem to some of you even more provocative; the percentage of blacks in our Armed Services. The black population in the United States is about 15 percent of our total population. However, the percentage of black enlistees in the Army is 30 percent. The percentage of first-term enlistees is even higher, some 34 percent. If this trend continues, 45 percent of the junior ranks will be black in 1980, and 65 percent of their NCO's will be black whereas the projected increase in the number of blacks in our officer corps will be nowhere near these figures.

I ask you, what kind of society calls upon its disadvantaged classes to serve in its military ranks while it excuses its more privileged classes from serving? Should not the privileged class be fairly represented in all the ranks of our military, including, particularly, the lower ranks? If we fail to address that imbalance, we are headed for trouble in ensuing years.

During the mid and late 60s, I addressed many anti-draft groups, particularly those from the academic community. Never, to my knowledge, did I find a black in these groups protesting mandatory service to our country.

When I ask young people why they do not want to serve in the voluntary forces, I receive all types of personal reasons. When I then ask them -- "If you won't serve, who do you expect will?" -- I receive no response. Who should serve and how should they be selected remains the critical question.

Ultimately the test of our All Volunteer Force must be its ability to respond in the event of an emergency. This should and must be our primary concern.

The demise of the draft in 1973 has inevitably changed our military but nowhere within the military has the surgery been greater than its effect on the reserve components and the National Guard. In fact, the status of these organizations is in an alarming state.

In Fiscal Year 1978, these organizations were 140,000 below our peacetime needs. The Individual Ready Reserves, consisting of those individuals who have fulfilled their active service, but who remain on the rolls for several years after they are released from active service, is in an even more alarming state of affairs. Half-a-million vacancies exist. Of this figure, 271,000 are in the combat specialties. These vacancies would have to be filled and trained before going to war.

The elimination of the draft has been felt mostly by the Reserves and the National Guard because these organizations had depended upon the draft induced accessions. This provided a very useful program for those individuals who, for one reason or another, wouldn't or couldn't spare the years on active duty. However, another important aspect of the demise of the draft's effect on the National Guard and the Reserves is the fact that these services have been suffering from a forced reduction in funds which are being used or reallocated to cover the unanticipated costs of sustaining the active duty forces. Because of the enormous costs of maintaining a military, we must find a less costly system than the present one and still be able to produce a professional active military, Reserve and National Guard.

Unless these projected shortages are met through modifying our All Volunteer Force, we may, ultimately, have to accept a more austere system such as the draft, to keep these spiraling costs of the All Volunteer Force in line.

Should we decide to modify the current All Volunteer Force, or even to revert to the draft, we cannot expect the costs of maintaining our military to be any lower. The bulk of our defense dollar is currently going for personnel costs; yet we can't expect the man in uniform to take a pay cut, particularly at the lower enlisted level. Many of their families are already on food stamps. We are just going to have to tighten our belts in other ways. This, of course, is easier said than done. While the true costs of the All Volunteer Force will probably never be fully known, its introduction brought changes in morale, welfare and recreation programs, commissary store activities, reenlistment bonuses and other incentives. Total personnel costs amount to \$68 billion per year but only half of this goes for the man in uniform. The rest goes for civilian pay and for retired military pensions.

The impact of declining birthrates beginning in the early 60s causes grave concern to those who worry about our future military manpower needs. This year approximately 2.1 million young American males will reach their 18th birthday. By 1987, that number will drop to 1.7 million -- a 20 percent reduction in the manpower pool. By 1993, we will see a 25 percent reduction. According to the Congressional Budget Office, almost one-third of those young people will not measure up to the physical, moral or mental standards required.

There is a general consensus that given present manpower procurement and utilization policies, the services will not be able to maintain current military manpower strengths in the 1980s.

What then are the arguments for retaining the present All Volunteer Force?

At the top of the list for most people is the inequity which has always been a part of any compulsory selective service system. In a time when we stress the equal rights of men and women and the right to freedom for all, it is difficult to justify the selection of some for involuntary service to the state. To select out some for sacrifice and to face those so selected with the prospect that they may have to make the supreme sacrifice causes all of us the gravest concern.

Some will argue that the government will take advantage of compulsory service to send young Americans abroad to fight in circumstances which they would not entertain if they were dependent upon a pool of volunteers. Others respond that the public support for involving American troops abroad would be increased by the existence of an all volunteer military establishment.

Many military manpower analysts believe that we have a variety of options available to us for increasing and improving the caliber of recruits for our active and reserve forces. These include:

1. Increased use of enlistment and reenlistment bonuses and other special compensation.
2. Federal income tax adjustments for military personnel and Reservists.
3. Increased non-monetary benefits to Reservists.
4. A more liberal Reserve compensation and/or retirement system.
5. Expanded educational assistance.
6. Increased recruitment efforts.

7. Modification of enlistment terms including possibly a shorter enlistment term and combining active force enlistment with service in the Selective Reserve.

8. Increasing the size of the manpower pool by reducing standards or recruiting more women and older personnel.

9. Reducing military manpower requirements through restructuring priorities, reducing commitments abroad, the conversion of military to civilian positions, increasing the length of enlistments or decreasing the use of early discharges or the separation of marginally undesirable personnel.

10. Increasing the Individual Required Reserve by eliminating automatic transfer to the Standby Reserve after 5 years, extending the total military obligation beyond the present 6 years, requiring female personnel to fulfill an IRR obligation and authorizing direct enlistment and reenlistment into the Individual Ready Reserve.

In summary, the active Armed Forces have been experiencing both quantitative and qualitative recruitment problems which appear likely to get worse. The difficulties in both the Selective Reserve and in the Individual Ready Reserve and the Standby Reserve is even greater. Many believe that the problems are of such magnitude -- or soon will be -- that only a return to peacetime conscription will fill the bill and provide the essential security for our nation.

The House Armed Services Committee, in approving the Fiscal Year 1980 Defense Authorization bill, included a provision requiring the President to commence standby draft registration on January 1, 1981, of all males becoming 18 years of age after December 31, 1980.

I find it difficult to disagree with the concept that we should have an inventory of the available manpower pool and the machinery in place to reinstitute the draft in as limited a time as possible. If history has taught us any lesson it is that the price of peace with freedom in this world is a reasonable level of readiness to mobilize and use force if our vital interests are challenged. We cannot fulfill our most sacred obligation to our country if we fail in that challenge.

A return to the draft does not mean a necessary saving for savings will result only if we reduce personnel costs. The question of whether some young men, or all young people, should be required to serve their country either in the military or in some alternative service at less than their labors would demand in the open market, given the level of risk and inconvenience, remains basic to the dispute over reinstitution of the selective or compulsory service concept.

I would be remiss also if you were left with the impression that I have covered all aspects of this debate or that we are united in what we perceive as the solution to this most complex problem. This has perhaps never been better highlighted than when the Secretary of the Army and his chief subordinate, the Chief of Staff of the United States Army got into a public dispute about whether or not we should return immediately to the draft. Even our population is divided over this matter. A Gallup Poll conducted in April of this year reveals that 49 percent of our population favors a return to mandatory service, whereas 46 percent are opposed. The same Gallup Poll also reveals that the general public favors registration by a 76 percent to 17 percent margin.

Both professionally and privately, I am dedicated to our system of government. In that connection, it is difficult to ignore the advice of George Washington who said: "It may be laid down as a primary position, and the basis of our system, that every citizen who enjoys the protection of a free government, owes not only a proportion of his property, but even his personal services to the defense of it."

In any event, it is my responsibility as a United States Senator and a person committed to a strong America, to ensure that our nation remains strong now and in the decades ahead. I intend to do just that. Meanwhile, I would like to hear from you as to how we may best accomplish this end.