

# Draft: What Is The Answer?

By BARBARA CLARK

Divisive controversy over Viet-Nam, unconstitutional restriction of individual rights and military inefficiency are the main arguments supporting the proposal of Senator Mark Hatfield (Dem-Oregon) for the elimination of the draft and the establishment of a volunteer army.

The coincidence of anti-draft sentiment and the recent strong emphasis on quality as the criteria for military efficiency has induced many politicians, both liberal and conservative, to oppose the draft and regard its end as necessary to quell the national dissent concerning the war and reassure the people that the government doesn't seek to usurp their rights. Also the creation of a professional instead of a conscripted army will allegedly alleviate tax burdens, and bring higher morale and greater military efficiency into the armed services. These objectives seem admirable, but are superficial, easily accomplished and consistently avoid the complex issues of which the draft is a mere manifestation.

Actually, three related problems are involved: American commitment to the Viet-Nam war, elimination of the draft and the establishment of a volunteer army. These three questions Hatfield attempted to resolve through the elimination of the draft, which he considered the malignant force behind the three aforesaid issues when he defended his bill in the Senate.

He decried the need for the draft, stating "that circumstances have changed" since "the period. . .when conscription was the only alternative to destruction. . .", and the draft is militarily inefficient and responsible for low morale." All of these conditions would be eliminated by the draft. Subsequent establishment of the volunteer army would refine the human element in defense and achieve the goal of quality so vital in nuclear age military organization.

Besides a more competent militia, a volunteer army would relieve government pressure on civilians. They would no longer need to argue that conscription was unconstitutional nor attack the government for depriving them of their liberties. Free to pursue life as they please, the populace would abandon their interest in the Viet-Nam cause for it would no longer directly

inconvenience anyone. Divorcing the people from the issue and cultivating popular apathy, the country would give internal peace, at least, and the government would be free to pursue a somewhat arbitrary foreign military policy.

The combination of no more draft and a volunteer army as presented by Hatfield is a solution, but a badly limited one. The less concise relationship of the three issues in reality renders the end of the draft a feeble and limited answer to the true issues.

I agree the draft should be eliminated. However, the alternative is that of a military hard-core, dedicated to the superiority of the military solution and willing to exercise it in a national crisis. Hatfield's argument that military subversion emanates from the high-ranking officers only lose value when the strict

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resocialization to military ideals which occurs upon joining the service is considered. Support from the lower ranks and enlisted men could be easily obtained through an appeal to American or popular sentiments. To offset this danger means a considerable revamping of American attitudes. Though this would be a requisite of any change in the draft law, the establishment of a volunteer army would depend more on such adjustment to preserve freedom than would the establishment of universal military conscription for all americans at the age of 18. Universal conscription would eliminate many of the injustices of the draft, prevent a high concentration of military power, and still provide an adequate defense machine, besides a militarily educated population.

Although a high degree of military efficiency would not be reached, the involvement in government military activity would still exist. Perhaps if the trends of humanity continue military importance will decline