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Executive Summary

Title: Universal Service as a Tool for Nation Building

Author: Major Jason Fiduccia, United States Marine Corps

Thesis: Universal national service can be used as a tool to complement economic aid programs as part of a whole of government approach to nation building. The ability of universal service to unite people in a common purpose, and its inherent accompanying economic stimulus, can provide states involved in nation building efforts an effective means to improve national unity, stabilize a country's social and economic conditions, and undermine insurgency movements.

Discussion: At the conclusion of World War II, the United States embarked on an ambitious, highly successful post-war reconstruction plan in Germany and other war-torn European countries that still serves as a blueprint for nation building efforts to this day. The Marshal Plan's assistance to Germany resulted in unprecedented economic growth that allowed Germany to quickly re-emerge as a regional economic power. The success of the Marshal Plan contrasts sharply with modern day efforts at nation building in Iraq and Afghanistan, where a large monetary investment has produced limited results at best. This essay proposes that universal national service can be used as a tool to complement economic aid programs as part of a whole of government approach to nation building. The ability of universal service to unite people in a common purpose and its inherent accompanying economic stimulus can provide states involved in nation building efforts an effective means to improve national unity, stabilize a country's social and economic conditions, and undermine insurgency movements.

The essay first explores the idea of national identity by explaining the key factors that lead to identity formation, with emphasis on the links between national identity, citizenship, and public service. Further discussion describes how service can promote positive social interaction between different ethnic groups, arguing that socialization and intergroup contact occurring through universal service can help to reduce ethnic strife in diverse societies. The essay then explores ways in which universal national service can undermine insurgent threats by fostering economic growth, improving literacy and education, and helping to gain the loyalty of neutral populations. Finally, this essay seeks to identify when, how, and under what circumstances universal service can be a viable option as a tool in nation building.

Conclusion: In countries lacking national unity, universal national service can assist in helping to break down barriers between different social and ethnic groups. This important change is accomplished by fostering environments that expose service members to the conditions required to allow for intergroup contact to facilitate in-group reappraisal. This process, if properly managed over time, has been proven to reduce prejudice and alleviate tensions. Additionally, national service programs can lower unemployment rates, build infrastructure, improve education, and foster economic growth. In turn, all of these actions are known to lower a nation's risk of entering into civil war. Such programs can also help gain the loyalty of politically neutral populations, and provide stability to nations that have recently experienced conflict, potentially extending periods of peace, which further reduces the risk of a return to violence.

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Figure 1. *Pettigrew's Reformulated Contact Theory*12

Preface

This research project was born of various assigned readings in the Marine Corps Command and Staff College curriculum that addressed the phenomenon of insurgent groups gaining popularity and support from their target populations, despite their oppressive and sometimes brutal tactics. Of specific interest was a reading from John Shy's *A People Numerous and Armed* that described how neutral colonists were co-opted to the Patriot cause after being coerced to serve in the colonial militia under threat of imprisonment. This inspired me to question whether or not similar tactics might be of use in Iraq, Afghanistan, or any other similar effort in which coalitions struggle to win the "hearts and minds" of the local population to prevent them from joining insurgent forces. My subsequent encounter with Allport and Pettigrew's research on the positive effects of intergroup contact combined with Collier and Hoeffler's research in the casual factors that correlate to increase risk of civil conflict, have led me to believe that true value can be gained from further research into the potentially beneficial effects that universal service may have on countries that are the subject of nation building efforts.

This effort would not have been possible without the assistance of Dr. Anne Louise Antonoff, whose insight and editing helped focus and clarify my research. I would also like to thank Dr. James Joyner and Dr. John Gordon, whose inspired conversations and insightful instruction on the topic of insurgency helped inspire my quest to seek a different approach to addressing this issue. Finally, I must thank my wife Marie for tolerating countless nights and weekends spent on research and writing. This project would have been impossible without her unwavering support and encouragement.

Introduction

At the conclusion of World War II, the United States embarked on an ambitious, highly successful post-war reconstruction plan in Germany and other war-torn European countries that still serves as a blueprint for nation building efforts to this day. The Marshal Plan's assistance to Germany resulted in unprecedented economic growth that allowed it to quickly re-emerge as a regional economic power.¹ The success of the Marshal Plan contrasts sharply with modern day efforts at nation building in Iraq and Afghanistan, where a disproportionately large monetary investment has produced limited results at best.² This essay proposes that universal national service can be used as a tool to complement economic aid programs as part of a whole of government approach to nation building. The ability of universal service to unite people in a common purpose and its inherent accompanying economic stimulus can provide states involved in nation building efforts an effective means to improve national unity, stabilize a country's social and economic conditions, and undermine insurgency movements.

The essay first explores the idea of national identity by explaining the key factors that lead to identity formation with emphasis on the links between national identity, citizenship, and public service. Further discussion describes how service can promote positive social interaction between different ethnic groups, arguing that socialization and intergroup contact occurring through universal service can help to reduce ethnic strife in diverse societies. The essay then explores ways in which universal national service can undermine insurgent threats by fostering

¹ J. Bradford DeLong and Barry Eichengreen, *The Marshall Plan: History's Most Successful Structural Adjustment Program*, National Bureau Of Economic Research, (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau Of Economic Research 1991), 51.

² Nina Serafino, Curt Tarnoff, and Dick K. Nanto, *U.S. Occupation Assistance: Iraq, Germany and Japan Compared*, CRS Report for Congress RL33331 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, March 23, 2006), 2, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL33331.pdf>. U.S. monetary aid to Iraq from 2003 to 2006 was roughly equivalent to the total aid provided to Germany, and almost double that provided to Japan from 1946-1952 (adjusted for inflation).

economic growth, improving literacy and education, and helping to gain the loyalty of neutral populations. Finally, this essay seeks to identify when, how, and under what circumstances universal service can be a viable option as a tool in nation building.

The Link Between Service and Identity

Universal Service Defined

To explore this hypothesis, “universal service” must first be defined. It is an ancient practice that traditionally linked citizenship to standing in defense of the nation. The earliest record of conscription dates back to 2500 B.C. ,when the ancient Egyptians enacted compulsory annual military training for young men,³ and universal male conscription is referenced in the Old Testament when:

“Jehovah spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai... in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, ... every male by their polls, from twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies.⁴

The ancient Greeks expected citizens to serve, and referenced conscript registries when questions involving citizen rights arose. The word “conscript” is derived from the Latin “conscribere milites” and refers to the registry of freeborn Roman citizens chosen for service in the Legions. During feudal times, nobles and land holders were obligated to serve their lords in times of war.⁵

³ Robert E. Summers and Harrison B. Summers, *Universal Military Service*, (New York, NY: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1941), 21.

⁴ Numbers 1: 1-3 (King James Bible Online), <http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Numbers-Chapter-1/>.

⁵ Rita J. Simon and Mohamed Alaa Abdel-Moneim, *A Handbook of Military Conscription and Composition the World Over*, (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011), 6-7, 12.

As an institution conscriptions has endured to this day, with 85 nations currently maintaining some form of military service requirement.⁶

Universal service differs from universal conscription by requiring all persons, regardless of status, to serve the nation in some capacity. It is also steeped in tradition, with perhaps the most famous call to serve being embodied in the French Revolution's levée en masse. Here France, faced with invasion from a coalition of European monarchies, declared:

“From this moment until that in which the enemy shall have been driven from the soil of the Republic, all Frenchmen are in permanent requisition for the service of the armies. The young men shall go to battle; the married men shall forge arms and transport provisions; the women shall make tents and clothing and shall serve in the hospitals; the children shall turn old linen into lint; the aged shall betake themselves to the public places in order to arouse the courage of the warriors and preach the hatred of kings and the unity of the Republic.”⁷

While not always mandatory or universal, governments have enacted national service policies to improve stability in contemporary times as well.

During the Great Depression, the United States established work relief programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and Public Works Administration to provide jobs to unemployed Americans and improve the nation's national forest lands and infrastructure. Since the 19th century, eastern European countries used universal national service for males by conscripting men into both the army and construction regiments and railroad troops.⁸

⁶ ChartsBin statistics collector team 2011, “Military Conscription Policy by Country,” ChartsBin.com, accessed 20 March, 2015, <<http://chartsbin.com/view/1887>>.

⁷ “The Levée en Masse, August 23, 1793,” in *The Constitutions and Other Select Documents Illustrative of the History of France, 1789-1907*, ed. Frank M. Anderson (Minneapolis: The H. Wilson Company, 1904), 183-184, http://books.google.com/books?id=rJceFGttcicC&pg=PR9&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false.

⁸ National Park Service, “The Civilian Conservation Corps,” NPS.gov, <http://www.nps.gov/voya/planyourvisit/cc-general-history.htm>, and “Railroad Troops / Railway Forces (Zheleznodorozhniki),” *Global Security.org*, accessed February 18, 2015, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/railroad-troops.htm>

The type of universal service decreed in the levée en masse arose from the need to support a country facing the imminent threat of war. As such, it was a national war effort. For the purpose of this essay, “universal service” takes on the broader purpose of helping to build a stronger, more unified nation that can avoid internal conflict. The work completed through national service can vary, depending on the situation, but has some common key characteristics. First, it is obligatory, meaning all citizens must serve in some capacity. Second, the service rendered should provide for the public good. This “public good” can consist of military or civil service. Service options can include, but are not limited to, public sector fields such as police, fire, medical, and education. It can also include public works projects to improve community infrastructure, and agricultural work. An effective universal service policy must also allow for exceptions and deferments so that it does not adversely affect private enterprise or offend cultural sensitivities. However, it cannot discriminate against, or intentionally exclude, ethnic or minority groups, nor can exceptions be used to exclude entire classes or groups of people from fulfilling an obligation to serve.

It is also important to define what universal service is not. It is not a means of nationalizing the economy or imposing government control over the labor force. Free markets are vital to promoting economic growth and must be protected. Universal service is not the mobilization of an entire population. It should be implemented situationally, dependent on manpower targets that allow a country to best address its economic and political conditions. Universal service is not indentured servitude and should have defined periods for service obligations. People fulfilling their service obligations should be paid an adequate wage and offered sufficient benefits, which make service attractive and rewarding. It should also include

options that allow people to serve in the capacity they are best suited for. Finally, any universal service program must be closely monitored and continuously audited to ensure that the program does not become a means for the elite or corrupt governments to exploit cheap labor.

How Identity is Formed

To understand how universal service can lead to the development of a unified national identity requires recognizing how a person's social identity is formed and influenced. Social identity is an individual's self-concept based on the groups in which he identifies himself as being a member.⁹ Thus, ethnic and national identity are subgroups of social identity.

Social Identity Theory explains that humans seek to enhance their own sense of self-esteem by assigning positive traits and values to the groups with which they identify, known as the "in-group," and negative traits with the groups that they do not identify, or "out-group." Once a person has assigned himself to a category, he will naturally accept the in-group's common attributes and behaviors as normal. He then develops an emotional need for the in-group to be successful in order to maintain a positive view of his own self-image.¹⁰ This need causes people to conduct social comparisons by contrasting their in-group perceptions to those of the out-groups, which in turn leads them to discriminate against those belonging to the out-group so that they can promote the success of their in-group, and enhance their self-image. Thus, groups compete not only for resources, but to boost their own self-esteem.¹¹

Identity also involves membership requirements that are established by both the in-groups and out-groups. National identity, ethnicity, and citizenship are social identity types that

⁹ Henri Tajfel, *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 2.

¹⁰ John C Turner, "Towards a Cognitive Redefinition of the Social Group," in *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*, ed. Henri Tajfel, (Cambridge: 1982), 34

¹¹ Saul McLeod, "Social Identity Theory," *Simplypsychology.org*, accessed January 16, 2015. <http://www.simplypsychology.org/social-identity-theory.html>

have specific terms of membership.¹² They are both chosen by the individual and assigned by others. They can be temporary or binding and vary in importance depending on a person's perspective. Identity is multifaceted, and every person is identified in multiple ways.¹³ For instance, a person can identify himself in order of personal importance as a doctor who is an Islamic-American. This person self-determines his most significant identity trait as "doctor." However, another person may identify the same man primarily as a Muslim and will determine that to be a positive or negative trait depending on how "Muslim" fits into their personal in-group/out-group profile.

Developing a Unified National Identity through Universal Service

In relation to nation building, the key to reducing intergroup tensions is to find a way to create a unifying in-group national identity that bonds people in pursuit of common national goals (such as self-defense and economic prosperity) while preventing discrimination that provokes conflict. National identity may not need to be the primary identity, but the adopted identity must be significant enough to influence the individual's behavior. In the example above, the doctor may hold his Hippocratic Oath and religious beliefs as personally more important than being an American citizen, but being an American can still be influential enough to cause him to believe that all people have a right to self-determination. Therefore, as long as an action does not conflict with his primary identity traits, he will not discriminate against others because they have different beliefs.

¹² James D. Fearon, "What Is Identity (As We Now Use the Word)?," Unpublished manuscript, last modified November 3, 1999, PDF File, 17. <https://web.stanford.edu/group/fearon-research/cgi-bin/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/What-is-Identity-as-we-now-use-the-word-.pdf>.

¹³ Vivian L. Vignoles, Seth J. Schwartz, and Koen Luyckx, "Introduction: Toward an Interrogative View of Identity," in *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*, ed. Seth J. Schwartz, Koen Luyckx, Vivian L. Vignoles, (New York: Springer, 2011) 6.

For people to accept a national identity, it must be desirable. One way to encourage desirability is to associate national identity with citizenship. The idea of the modern citizen evolved from the American and French Revolutions and evoked the notion that governments derived their power from the people or “citizens” of the nation.¹⁴ To be a citizen denotes common purpose among members of a specific group and makes a person, “part of an imagined political community [who can] participate in a political and national collective project.”¹⁵ This form of identity is especially desirable because citizenship grants members certain rights. It also obligates them to certain participatory acts. The rights and obligations of citizens vary by country, but commonly include civil rights that define the freedoms to which citizens are entitled, political rights that determine the ways in which citizens can participate in the government, and social rights that allow access to social welfare programs and provide the inherent, “right to share ... in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society.”¹⁶ The obligations of citizens, known as “political obligations,” take the form of both laws and traditions, and nearly always require citizens to enter into a social contract with other citizens by contributing to the state in some way such as paying taxes, obeying the law, and being willing to stand in defense of the nation.¹⁷

Citizenship as a Unifying Trait

¹⁴ Andreas Fahrmeir, *Citizenship: the Rise and Fall of a Modern Concept*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 27.

¹⁵ Jef Huysmans and Xavier Guillaume, “Citizenship and Securitized: Interstitial Politics,” in *Citizenship and Security: the Construction of Political Being*, ed. Xavier Guillaume and Jef Huysmans (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 24.

¹⁶ T.H. Marshall, *Class, Citizenship and Social Development*, (New York: Doubleday, 1964), 71, quoted in Fahrmeir, *Citizenship*, 2.

¹⁷ Richard Dagger and David Lefkowitz, “Political Obligation”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (Fall 2014), ed. Edward N. Zalta. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/political-obligation/>. For additional information on the specific obligations of citizens by country see “Citizenship Pathways and Border Protection,” *Library of Congress.gov*, accessed Feb 12, 2014, <http://www.loc.gov/law/help/citizenship-pathways/index.php>. Additional information can also be found on country specific immigration and naturalization websites.

People desire citizenship because it comes with benefits. However, just because two people can claim citizenship rights does not make them unified, nor does it mean they will avoid conflict. The current Shia – Sunni divide in Iraq is an example. Both groups identify themselves as Iraqi, but this common identity does not equate to unity.¹⁸ Universal service can help bridge this divide by promoting the formation of a cohesive in-group, united through the “bond of citizenship” because of common service to the nation.

A common “citizen” identity can bring unity to different groups for several reasons. First, the obligations of citizenship require contributions to the state, and universal service allows all groups an opportunity to fulfill that obligation. Moreover, people tend to view public servants as trustworthy citizens. A 2014 survey of 25 countries that ranked 30 professions by trustworthiness found that the top eight most trustworthy professions were all occupations that provided services to the general public: firefighters, nurses, doctors, teachers, pharmacists, farmers, soldiers, and paramedics respectively.¹⁹ A similar 2014 Pew Research Poll of over 38,600 people from 34 developing countries found that the military is the most trusted national institution in the developing world with 79% of respondents declaring that the military had a “good” influence on their country’s progress.²⁰ Thus, members of the military and other public safety and service occupations are seen as trustworthy and dependable and are, therefore, more likely to be accepted as members of a broad national in-group that spans across ethnic, cultural,

¹⁸ Mansoor Moaddel, Mark Tessler and Ronald Inglehart, “Occupation and National Pride: The Case of Iraq,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 72, No. 4 (Winter, 2008), 686. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25167659>. In a 2007 survey, more than 98 percent of both Shia and Sunni respondents answered “Quite proud” or “very proud” when asked, “How proud are you to be an Iraqi?”

¹⁹ GfK Verein, “Trust in Professions 2014.” (Nuremburg, Germany: GfK Verein, 2014), 8. http://www.gfk.com/Documents/Press-Releases/2014/GfK_Trust%20in%20Professions_e.pdf. It is also worth noting that politicians ranked as the least trusted profession in the world, and that opinions of police officers were split with favorable ratings in more developed countries, and less favorable ratings in South America and Africa.

²⁰ Pew Research Center, “Crime and Corruption: Top Problems in Emerging and Developing Countries,” *Pew Research.org*. (2014), 3. <http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2014/11/Pew-Research-Center-Country-Problems-and-Institutions-Report-FINAL-November-6-2014.pdf>.

social, and religious differences. Consequently, expanding membership in these types of organizations through a universal service requirement in post-conflict or newly emerging nations may prove beneficial in helping to build both unity and national pride.

Undermining Insurgency Through Universal Service

In their seminal work, “Greed and Grievance in Civil War,” Collier and Hoeffler calculate several factors that demonstrate a statistically significant effect on the probability that a country will experience civil war. These factors include the dominance of one ethnic group over another, physical geographic population dispersion, low income and economic growth, male enrollment in secondary education, and the amount of time passed since the last episode of internal conflict.²¹ A properly managed universal service policy can help countries to address each of these factors.

Addressing Ethnic Dominance

Contrary to common belief, ethnically diverse societies do not show a significant increase in conflict risk unless they are characterized by the dominance of one ethnic group over another. In fact, the more diverse a society is, the less likely it is to experience civil war. This is because rebel groups typically need a homogenous base to recruit from, and the more diverse a country is, the smaller that base group will be, making it difficult to achieve the numbers required to mount an effective insurgency.²² However, the opposite is true if one ethnicity is able to dominate over the other ethnic groups. Countries with a dominant ethnicity are twice as likely to experience civil war as countries that do not.²³ Ethnic dominance exists when one ethnic group

²¹ Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, “Greed and Grievance in Civil War,” Oxford Economic Papers Vol. 56, No. 4 (Oct., 2004), 581. <http://www.jstor.org.lomc.idm.oclc.org/stable/3488799>.

²² Collier and Hoeffler, “Greed and Grievance in Civil War,” 570.

²³ Collier and Hoeffler, “Greed and Grievance in Civil War,” 581.

comprises 45 to 90 percent of a population and when political allegiance is defined by ethnicity.²⁴ For this reason, developing a unifying national identity that discourages discrimination and seeks to reduce dominant behavior among factions is a vital component of any country's efforts to maintain internal stability and promote cooperation towards national goals.

Associating occupations with citizenship alone is not enough to break down long standing ethnic, religious, and cultural divisions that plague many developing nations. However, the socializing effect of desegregation and intermingling different groups through universal service can be a powerful catalyst in changing both opinions and behaviors.

Creating Bonds Between Rival Groups

Socialization theory asserts that national norms can be imbedded in groups through government policies.²⁵ In other words, policies such as who serves and in what capacity can convince a person to accept these policies in larger society. The U.S. integration of African Americans into the military demonstrates this effect. In 1943, 84 percent of white soldiers surveyed had an unfavorable view of racial integration in the military. By 1951, after integration was officially implemented, the collective opinion had changed drastically with only 44 percent of respondents indicating an unfavorable view of racial integration, even though not all members surveyed were part of integrated units.²⁶ The positive change created by socialization on one topic alone is unlikely to change an individual's overall long held political and social views, but it certainly can affect his view about specific situations and, if properly managed, can be used to

²⁴ Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," 572.

²⁵ Ronald R. Krebs, "School for the Nation? How Military Service Does Not Build Nations, and How it Might," *International Security* 28, no. 4 (Spring 2004): 90. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4137450>

²⁶ Charles C. Moskos Jr., "Racial Integration in the Armed Forces," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 72, No. 2 (Sep., 1966), 140.

help advance the cause of developing a more cohesive national identity. Once this socialization occurs, it opens the door to more influential group bonding forces created by intergroup contact.

Intergroup Contact Theory takes socialization a step further by bringing together people from various ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds to work together towards a common cause that unites them.²⁷ Four conditions are required to enable intergroup contact to improve relations. First, all groups must have equal status within the situation. Second, the groups must engage in an active, common, goal oriented effort. Third, groups must be required to cooperate to achieve the common goal. Finally, the mixed group requires the support and specific sanction of authorities, law, or custom in order for the contact to improve relations.²⁸

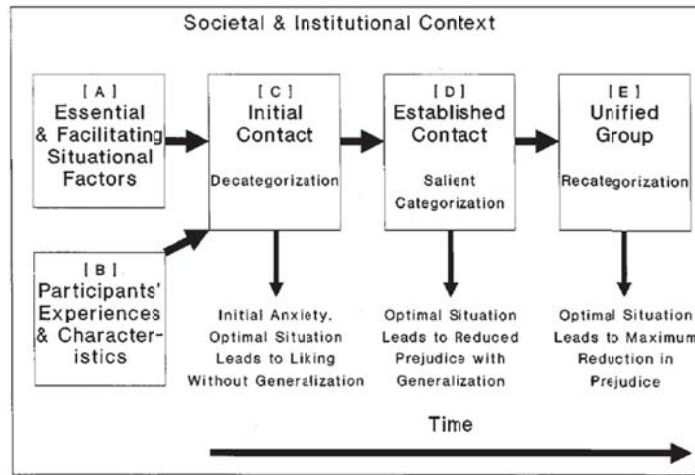
Meeting these conditions enables four perception-affecting processes to occur, as shown in Figure 1. The first is learning about the out-group. When people learn new information about an out-group's culture, they are able to re-evaluate negative stereotypes and prejudice. Even if a pre-conceived negative behavior is confirmed, learning about the out-group's culture can help to change a person's opinion from negative to neutral or positive.²⁹

²⁷ Thomas F. Pettigrew, "Intergroup contact theory." *Annual Review of Psychology* 49, no. 1: (February 1998): 65.

²⁸ Pettigrew, "Intergroup Contact Theory," 66-67.

²⁹ Pettigrew, "Intergroup Contact Theory," 70 -71.

Fig. 1 Reformulated Contact Theory³⁰



The second process that occurs through intergroup contact is behavior change. Forming a new group that is focused on a common goal creates a new situation and new expectations for group member behavior. Achieving the common goal creates an expectation that members will accept and cooperate with each other. This required change in behavior then often leads to a change in attitude towards the out-group. Behavior change is further enhanced through repetition of contact and rewarding the positive cooperative behavior.³¹

The third process is generating affective ties. Repetitive contact with an out-group can reduce anxiety associated with the out-group and also leads to developing friendships. This process is effective even if the friendship is limited to an individual. A study of 3,800 Europeans demonstrated that empathy and friendship with an individual from an out-group improves attitudes toward the out-group as a whole, and even generalized to a better view of other

³⁰ Pettigrew, "Intergroup Contact Theory," 77.

³¹ Pettigrew, "Intergroup Contact Theory," 71.

unrelated outgroups.³² In other words, having an outgroup friend improves a person's perception of multiple outgroups.

The final process is intergroup reappraisal. Intergroup contact allows the individual to re-evaluate his metrics for inclusion in the in-group, and can lead to the in-group being redefined in terms that are less exclusive and biased, resulting in better relationships with the outgroup. These four processes complement and build upon each other and culminate with intergroup reappraisal that allows for the acceptance of the out-group, and in ideal situations, redefining the in-group to include the out-group.³³

American efforts in desegregation again provide outstanding examples of how intergroup contact can improve relations. In the 1951 survey on racial integration in the military cited above, the unfavorable view of integration dropped to just 17 percent when the survey sample was reduced to only those service members who had served in integrated units.³⁴ Thus, intergroup contact was 83% successful in changing the opinions of those who had been exposed to the required conditions.

The success of intergroup contact is not limited to just members of the military. Similar studies conducted in the 1950s compared the opinions held by white housewives living in public housing towards African Americans. The study found that women living in desegregated neighborhoods held a 75 percent positive view of desegregated housing compared to only a 25 percent positive view from women living in segregated neighborhoods. Furthermore, when asked to describe African American faults, women living in desegregated neighborhoods used descriptors that emphasized personal issues such as "feeling of inferiority," while women from

³² Pettigrew, "Intergroup Contact Theory," 71-72.

³³ Pettigrew, "Intergroup Contact Theory," 72.

³⁴ Moskos, "Racial Integration," 141.

segregated neighborhoods listed negative racial stereotypes describing blacks as “rowdy” or “dangerous.”³⁵ Additional studies observed that the greater the number of interactions between white and black families, the more positive the opinions became. For example, 75 percent of families who had multiple conversation-type interactions voiced a positive opinion of black families, compared to only 33 percent of respondents who had only casual passing interactions.³⁶ Additionally, numerous studies addressing multiple ethnic and social groups, ranging from immigrants and the disabled to opinions about specific occupations, have validated intergroup contact as a viable and legitimate means of bringing in-groups and out-groups into more harmonious relationships.³⁷

The key variable in this process is time.³⁸ While casual contact has been repeatedly demonstrated to improve the perception of the out-group in most situations, it does not usually result in meaningful change or redefining the in-group to be less exclusive. Prolonged meaningful contact in an uncontrolled environment is difficult to achieve. Prejudiced people tend to avoid contact with out-groups, and intergroup strife and rivalry limits the contact groups can have.³⁹ To continue with the U.S. race relations analogy, a white supremacist usually does not, of his own accord, choose to have meaningful contact with minorities, while a person who holds no specific racist views may still avoid contact with minorities for fear of reprisal from other members of his in-group.

Conscripted universal national service can play an integral role in ensuring that the four conditions required for intergroup contact to successfully create a positive change in national

³⁵ Pettigrew, “Intergroup Contact Theory,” 67.

³⁶ Pettigrew, “Intergroup Contact Theory,” 68.

³⁷ Pettigrew, “Intergroup Contact Theory,” 68.

³⁸ Pettigrew, “Intergroup Contact Theory,” 77.

³⁹ Pettigrew, “Intergroup Contact Theory,” 78.

identity are present. Properly managed service requirements can expose participants to prolonged meaningful contact that fosters the formation of affectionate ties. Creating multi-ethnic work cohorts and groups to perform public service forces the group members to cooperate towards achieving the assigned common goals. To demonstrate that the government does not endorse ethnic dominance, it should enact regulations within service organizations that guarantee equal treatment and ensure promotions and advancement are based on merit, not ethnicity. In turn, this policy can strengthen the employees' trust in the government and each other.

Those engaged in national service are also likely to enjoy positive re-enforcement for their actions in the form of support from the public because they are involved in service that is associated with citizenship. Furthermore, because universal service requires all citizens to participate, the likelihood of intergroup reappraisal taking place among a significant portion of the population is increased, and over time the respect and friendships created can help to address issues of discrimination and create a more unified national identity.

Linking Dispersed Populations

Countries with populations characterized by high physical geographic dispersion have a very high risk of entering conflict compared to countries with populations that are geographically concentrated.⁴⁰ Universal service can be used to address this issue by intermingling isolated populations through service. Countries affected by this risk can adapt their service policies to allow people to serve in regions they would not normally be exposed to. Thus, the same benefits created by socialization and intergroup contact between rival groups can also help to create links

⁴⁰ Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," 581. Nations with extreme physical dispersion have a 37% risk of entering into conflict.

between isolated populations, assisting them to join in a unified national identity with people they would not normally associate with.

Providing Economic Stimulus

A direct correlation exists between a country's economic growth and its risk for entering into civil war. In fact, studies indicate that for every 1 percent increase in GDP, the country's risk of war decreased by the same amount.⁴¹ However, once a nation enters into a state of conflict, breaking the cycle of violence and economic deterioration becomes difficult:

Conflict destroys accumulated physical and human capital, forces replacement of labor, and deteriorates institutional capacity. A country experiencing conflict cannot secure long term returns for investments in both physical and human capital, resulting in low investment in health and education. All of these factors lead to low levels of human development. A country with low levels of human development has more difficulty in improving institutions, and in increasing productivity and potential growth. In turn, lower growth rates heighten the risk of conflict, potentially trapping a country in the loop.⁴²

Universal service can help to intervene and break this cycle by supplementing economic aid with employment opportunities and economic stimulus programs.

During the Great Depression, New Deal work programs provided more than 8,500,000 jobs to young Americans and were intended to serve as, "... a psychological weapon to fight a delaying action against demoralization and despair" for the unemployed.⁴³ They also produced an impressive list of physical infrastructure products that include 651,000 miles of roads, three billion trees planted, 89,000 miles of telephone wire hung, the construction of more than 8,000

⁴¹ Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," 581.

⁴² Namsuk Kim and Pedro Conceicao, "The Economic Crisis, Violent Conflict, and Human Development," *International Journal of Peace Studies* 15, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 2010): 31.
http://web.undp.org/developmentstudies/docs/hd_conflict_2009.pdf

⁴³ William W. Bremer, "Along the "American Way: The New Deal's Work Relief Programs for the Unemployed," *The Journal of American History* 62, No. 3 (Dec., 1975), pp. 651.

state, national, and local parks, and the construction and repair of 124,000 bridges, and 125,000 public buildings.⁴⁴

In a similar way, Russian construction and rail troops have been used since the 19th century as source of cheap labor for improving civil and military infrastructure in areas lacking an adequate labor force. These regiments also provided a means of employment and a path for integrating non-Slavic populations with language barriers into Russian society through service and exposure to the Russian military.⁴⁵

While no direct correlation exists between unemployment and violence, unemployment is indirectly linked as a factor in a country's economic health which does contribute to conflict risk.⁴⁶ As part of a nation building effort, employment programs similar to those described above can be established and manned through a universal service policy. Funding these programs with foreign aid can serve as powerful economic stimulus for a struggling economy. The Marshall Plan demonstrated that even modest sums of money, in terms of the recipient country's GDP, invested in foreign economies can set conditions for significant and rapid economic growth.⁴⁷ Thus, a universal service program can address employment issues and infrastructure requirements while also "priming the pump," to improve a nation's economic health.

⁴⁴ National Park Service, "The Civilian Conservation Corps," *NPS.gov*, <http://www.nps.gov/voya/planyourvisit/cc-general-history.htm>, and U-S-History.com, "Works Progress Administration," <http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1599.html>.

⁴⁵ Ellen Jones, "Manning the Soviet Military," *International Security* 7, No. 1 (Summer, 1982), 107-108. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2538691>.

⁴⁶ Christopher Cramer, "Unemployment and Participation in Violence," *World Development Report 2011. Background Paper*, (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2010), 24. <http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website01306/web/pdf/wdr%20background%20paper%20-%20cramer.pdf>.

Multiple studies have shown that unemployment rates do not directly correlate to violent activity, but some evidence does suggest that abusive labor practices may be a contributing factor in fueling civil unrest.

⁴⁷ DeLong and Eichengreen, "The Marshall Plan," 45-46. The monetary aid provided to Europe was roughly 2.5% of European GDP, but it served as significant stimulus because it represented as much as half the supply demand gap in some countries.

Improving Education.

For every 10 percent increase in male secondary education enrollment, a country's risk of civil war decreases by 3%.⁴⁸ This aspect of nation building also can be addressed through universal service. National service programs have historically included education programs to aid those who served. For example, 87 percent of African Americans employed by the Civilian Conservation Corps participated in literacy and other education programs,⁴⁹ and studies have shown that the GI Bill not only improved America's overall level of education, but also increased civic participation among participants.⁵⁰ Furthermore, vocational training can provide useful job skills that can continue to provide employment once a person's service obligation is complete.⁵¹ Universal service can improve education through similar programs, and can expand access by allowing those who are already educated to perform their service obligation in the capacity of teachers. Additionally, infrastructure improvement programs, staffed by those performing their obligated service, can build schools and expand access to electricity and modern forms of communication that further aid in improving literacy and education levels as a whole.

Prolonging Peace Duration

⁴⁸ Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance," 581.

⁴⁹ Howard W. Oxley, "The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Education of the Negro," *The Journal of Negro Education* 7, No. 3, (Jul., 1938), pp. 376. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2291895>.

⁵⁰ Suzanne Mettler and Eric Welch, "Civic Generation: Policy Feedback Effects of the GI Bill on Political Involvement over the Life Course," *British Journal of Political Science* 34, No. 3 (July 2004), pp. 516-517. <http://www.jstor.org.lomc.idm.oclc.org/stable/4092331>.

⁵¹ Jones, "Manning the Soviet Military," 107. During the cold War, one third of conscripted Russian construction troops retained the vocation they were trained in following their required service.

Addressing the factors listed above through a universal service policy can reduce a country's risk of entering into violent civil conflict, and for each year that a country avoids violent conflict, its risk is further reduced. Whether the passing of time results in healing due to addressing grievances or simply reflects a decrease in rebel group resources, the effect is still statistically positive.⁵² Thus, the benefits of universal service, including unity created by intergroup contact, employment and construction projects that stimulate the economy, and improved education can have a cascading effect that creates momentum for an enduring peace.

Converting Neutral Populations

Conscripted service has the potential to change the opinions of the politically neutral and convince them to support the conscripting side. Some people may deem this method of coercion as unsavory, or at the least undemocratic, but any country combating an insurgent threat must face this reality. Ample historical evidence demonstrates the effectiveness of this process when implemented by insurgent groups who often use brutal methods.

In his many treatises on revolution, Mao Zedong underscores the importance of winning over the masses and emphasizes that insurgencies cannot tolerate neutrality: "In the last analysis, there can be no neutral...they can only be either revolutionary or counter-revolutionary."⁵³ To this end, Mao also justifies the use of violence and intimidation in forcing the people's support, "A revolution is not like inviting people to dinner... A revolution is an uprising, an act of violence whereby one class overthrows the power of another ... To put it bluntly, it is necessary to bring about a brief reign of terror in every rural area; otherwise we could never suppress the

⁵² Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance," 589.

⁵³ Mao Zedong, "Report on the Peasant Movement in Hunan, February 1927," in *Mao Zedong on China's Revolutions: A Brief History with Documents*, ed. Timothy Cheek (New York, NY: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002), 96.

activities of the counterrevolutionaries...”⁵⁴ Thus, Mao makes clear that insurgent groups cannot afford to allow the population the political freedom to choose which side they want to support.

In describing an insurgent captured during the French Algiers Campaign, Trinquier offers a more in-depth explanation of how a neutral person can be turned into an insurgent by means of compulsion:

I was a good worker and was earning an honest living. One day, I was stopped by a fellow who insisted I pay a certain sum to the F.L.N. At first I refused, and was beaten up by the three men he had with him. I paid. The next month the same sum was asked. I paid it without argument. Some time later, I became a collector myself. I received a list of persons who were to contribute and a small armed team to protect me during the collection. Then, as I was athletic and in good health, I was asked to enter into the armed organization-the A.L.N.-the Army of National Liberation. I wanted to refuse, but a few pointed threats made me accept. From that time on I was lost, because to be admitted to the A.L.N., one first had to prove his worth; that is, to carry out an armed attack in the city... I did what was required of me and, three days later, I entered as a member into a cell of the A.L.N.⁵⁵

These examples demonstrate how forced service, imposed with threat of violence, can allow an insurgent group to gain the control and support of populations that might otherwise remain peaceful. Universal service offers governments a more humane means to counter these efforts while achieving similar effects that support the government’s goals.

The American Revolutionary War provides an example of how universal service can help a government gain the loyalty of its neutral parties. A significant challenge faced by colonial leaders was the political apathy of the population. A majority of service eligible men were reluctant to risk their family’s livelihood by volunteering to serve in the militia. Most instead preferred to take the path of neutrality rather than choose sides in an uncertain conflict.⁵⁶ Here

⁵⁴ Mao Zedong, “On New Democracy, January 15, 1940,” in *Mao Zedong on China’s Revolutions*, 47-48.

⁵⁵ Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency* (New York: Praeger, 1964), 11.

⁵⁶ John Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed: Reflections on the Military Struggle for American Independence*, (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1990), 237. Though the colonists of the American Revolution can be considered an insurgent force, this essay considers their use of conscription as an example of a legitimate

too, neutrality was not a viable option. Militias from both sides of the conflict exacted a toll from those who did not offer support, and many colonies enacted obligatory militia service laws that carried strict punishment for failure to comply. These laws were largely successful in achieving compliance, but more significantly, compliance also seemed to change the political position of those who served from neutral to sympathetic. “[O]nce [the colonists] had seen and even taken part in hounding, humiliating, perhaps killing men known to them as social superiors, they could not easily reacquire the unthinking respect for wealth and status that underpinned the old order.”⁵⁷ From episodes such as these, it can be reasoned that conscripted service is an effective means of not only gaining compliance from the neutral population, but also convincing them to support the conscripting party’s cause.

A well-managed universal service policy can leverage this phenomenon to provide a government with a tool to combat insurgency and strengthen national unity. The episode from the American Revolution demonstrates that the same psychological forces that elicit support from people who are compelled to support insurgent groups are also at work on those who are conscripted to perform government service. While legitimate governments cannot justify the use of terror to compel their citizens to serve, they can provide proper incentives and benefits, as well as coercive laws that may include fines, imprisonment, or the revocation of certain rights and privileges to encourage citizens to accept service. Once people are engaged in service, the government has the advantage of having a “captive audience” to whom it can present its message of why it should be supported. Service in the form of conscription into military and local militias

government policy. Colonial governments had the authority to impose conscripted militia service long before the outbreak of war with England.

⁵⁷ Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed*, 239-242.

can also enable the government to provide security to protect the population from the insurgent groups who would use more violent means to compel compliance.

The Israeli Example

Israel serves as an outstanding case study in universal service because it represents a nation that has a universal service requirement, enduring ethnic conflict, and clear ethnic dominance by Israeli Jews. Israel's universal service requirement only applies to Jewish citizens and two minority groups, the Druze and Circassians. Other Israeli Arabs are not required to serve in the Israeli Defense Forces, but can volunteer for them.⁵⁸ The integration of ethnic Druze citizens into Israeli society is an example of the successful use of military service in helping to create a unified national identity.

The Druze in the IDF

The Druze are a small community of ethnic Arabs who practice a unique religion that blends the tenants of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. They number about 1 million worldwide, with most living in Syria and Lebanon. Just over 100,000 Druze live in Israel, and they are the only major non-Jewish people that are conscripted into the Israeli Defense Force.⁵⁹ Service in the IDF creates an important bond between Israeli citizens. In a region that largely identifies itself along ethnic lines, both Jews and Druze consider the Druze to be Israeli, not just because of their physical location within the boundaries of the Israeli state, but because both are willing to sacrifice in the name of the state and serve in the IDF.⁶⁰ Thus, service to the state functions as a

⁵⁸ Jane's World Armies Online, March 30, 2015, "Israel," accessed April 3, 2015, <https://janes-ihs-com.lomc.idm.oclc.org/CustomPages/Janes/DisplayPage.aspx?DocType=Reference&ItemId=+++1319243>.

⁵⁹ Dr. Naim Aridi, "The Druze in Israel: History & Overview," *The Jewish Virtual Library.org*, 1-2. accessed December 27, 2014. http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society_&_Culture/druze.html.

⁶⁰ Lisa Hajjar, "Making Identity Policy: Israel's Interventions among the Druze," *Middle East Report*, (Jul. - Sep., 1996), 3. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3013259>.

litmus test for legitimate citizenship and provides the ethnic Druze with an entitlement of “cultural currency” in the Hebrew dominated society.

While the Israeli Druze example demonstrates the potential benefits of universal service, it also serves as a warning that universal service cannot solve all issues related to ethnic tension. Despite their service, many Druze still feel that they are treated as second class citizens in the larger Israeli society because they are not Jewish, and some Jewish Israelis do hold cultural bias towards the Druze. Still, most Druze see their military service as fulfilling the promise to provide a means of integration and opportunity for advancement for all who are willing to demonstrate their commitment as citizens through service.⁶¹ In turn, Jewish leaders recognize the Druze community as, “an organic part of Israeli society.”⁶²

Palestinians in the IDF

This pattern also appears to hold true with Palestinian-Israeli Arabs who volunteer to serve in the IDF. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the most enduring ethnic disputes of the modern era and appears to have no amicable end in the near future. Yet, Palestinians serving in the IDF offer valuable insight into the significant influence of military service on identity. Interviews reveal that despite ethnic tensions, most Palestinians who served still identify themselves as Israeli in some form. Self-described identities included: “Israeli Arab,” “Israeli Bedouin,” “Zionist,” “Arab formerly of Palestinian origin,” and “My identity card is Israeli, I’m an Arab Palestinian, but not all the time.”⁶³ Thus, Palestinians who have served in the IDF

⁶¹ Hajjar, “Making Identity Policy,” 4.

⁶² Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Ruth Eglash, “Will the Druze Relatives of an Israeli Hero be Sidelined by the ‘Jewish State?’,” *The Washington Post Online*, December 4, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/will-the-druze-relatives-of-an-israeli-hero-be-sidelined-by-the-jewish-state/2014/12/04/edd21e3c-33af-4ab3-9df6-fa76e6bcf11a_story.html.

⁶³ Rhoda Kanaaneh, “Embattled Identities: Palestinian Soldiers in the Israeli Military,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 32, no. 3 (Spring 2003), 9. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jps.2003.32.3.5>.

associate themselves with the State while still maintaining association with their ethnic identity.

Many who served also believed that their service made a difference in the way they were viewed by Jewish Israelis:

What is most important is that I have my 'reserve duty card' proving that I gave for this state and that I continue to give. Whenever I have any problem, I whip out the card and this changes everything. It opens all the doors. I am suddenly one of them.⁶⁴

Episodes such as this suggests that military service creates bonds of loyalty despite the animosity present in the larger non-serving public.

The Israeli example shows both the potential for universal service and its limitations. Universal service cannot create an ethnically pure national identity, nor should it be expected to solve all inter-ethnic rivalries and disputes. Ethnic identities that existed prior to service will continue to exist post-service, but the opinions of rival groups can be positively affected, and a positive experience while serving can allow identity to include association with the state. However, service does create conditions that orient multi-ethnic groups towards a common goal, while fostering an environment that promotes cooperation and helps to build a common unifying identity. The Israeli example also demonstrates how the link between service, citizenship, and its benefits is a means of encouraging the acceptance of service to the state and of creating a common goal of preserving the state so that the benefits of citizenship endure.

Arguments Against Universal Service

Universal Service is Too Expensive for a Nation Building Effort.

⁶⁴ Kanaaneh, "Embattled Identities," 14-15.

One common argument that may be levied against using universal service in nation building efforts is that the implementation of such an ambitious program would have too high a cost. There is no doubt that a universal service program as presented here is expensive, but the idea that the cost is too high quickly unravels when comparing the potential cost of helping fund universal service in a developing country with the amount actually expended in a prolonged war. For example, the congressional research service has calculated that by the end of fiscal year 2015, the United States will have spent \$819.6 billion dollars on the war in Iraq.⁶⁵ Based on World Bank economic data, the United States could have funded jobs for the entire unemployed Iraqi population (16 percent) in 2013 for only 4.4 percent of the money spent to fund the wars.⁶⁶ Multiplied out for the 12 years of war, the cost calculated amounts to barely half of the total spent to date. When adding the additional indirect costs of lost economic opportunities, care for wounded veterans, and 12 years of constant war, it becomes obvious that funding universal service is not truly prohibitive when compared to funding military action.

Universal Service Can Actually Antagonize Ethnic Tensions

Some experts argue that conscripted service fails to serve as a melting pot for a nation, and can actually result in increasing ethnic divisions by promoting and reinforcing the dominance of one ethnicity over another. For instance, in the Israeli military, a clear ethnic divide exists between those who serve in the elite paratrooper units and those who serve in the regular Golani Brigades. The paratroopers tend to be of upper and middle class ethnic

⁶⁵ Amy Belasco, *The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11*, CRS Report for Congress RL33110 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, December 8, 2014, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL33110.pdf>)

⁶⁶ The World Bank, "World Development Indicators: Iraq," *World Databank*, accessed February 18, 2015, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/reports/tableview.aspx>.

Ashkenazi origin, while the Golani brigades are heavily working class Mizrahi.⁶⁷ Therefore, the military, “maintains and reproduces ethnic division” that exists in society at large.

The military and other public organizations reflect society, including ethnic differences, and conflict often accompanies these differences. However, the proposal presented here is not designed to suggest that universal service policies can create perfect harmony among all citizens. Ethnic rivalries may continue to exist, and even high-functioning societies usually have some kind of ongoing social dispute. However, the bonds created through service may help overcome stereotypes and alleviate ethnic tensions. While rivalries may not be eliminated, ample evidence suggests that prolonged intergroup contact does improve perceptions between outgroups, thereby reducing tensions. At the same time, the benefits of citizenship, earned through service to the community, can encourage civic participation and promote the preservation of the state so that those earned benefits do not expire.

The Host Nation May Oppose Universal Service

This essay proposes universal service as tool for use in nation building and does not intend to enter into a debate about its utility in stable, developed countries like the United States. Rather, it addresses only nations that are vulnerable to civil war and internal conflict. A country might find itself in this state as the result of recent interstate conflict that forces a regime change, such as was the case of Iraq in 2003, internal conflict in a failed state such as Somalia, or sweeping political changes like the fall of Soviet Union.

Regardless of the situation, the implementation of any universal service policy must be adapted to the conditions “on the ground.” At the conclusion of an inter-state conflict or in

⁶⁷ Dana Kachtan, “The Construction of Ethnic Identity in the Military—From the Bottom Up,” *Israel Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Fall 2012), 153-154. <http://www.jstor.org>

failed state situations, an international coalition may have the ability to convince the people to adopt such a policy as part of a cease fire agreement or a new constitution. In cases where fragile states that still possess a sovereign government are being assisted, a universal service policy can be made a pre-requisite for monetary aid or membership in an international organization. Whatever of the circumstances, success depends on universal service providing the conditions for successful intergroup contact. Therefore, such a policy must garner the good will of the people. To do this, universal service should be incentivized, rather than imposed. Universal service creates opportunities for employment, education, infrastructure improvement, and economic growth. These opportunities must be leveraged as part of an information operations campaign so that the service to the state is seen as a legitimate form of validating a person's citizenship and inclusion in a unified national identity.

Regardless of what form universal service takes, no "one size fits all" policy exists for it, nor is universal service a universal answer to the threat of internal conflict. Sovereign nations may refuse to implement this type of reform regardless of incentives offered, and implementation may actually be detrimental in states with severe internal conflict or active civil war.

Timeline for Implementing a Universal Service Policy

Time is the key factor in determining if a universal service policy can be effective. Socialization and intergroup contact that occur because of national service policies can be powerful tools for improving national unity, but for these processes to be effective, they require adequate time for affectionate bonds to form and group reappraisal to take place. If a country is already engaged in severe civil conflict, it may prove impossible to meet the required conditions for this to occur. Thus, as a tool for nation building, universal service should be implemented as soon as possible in the nation building process so that it can help to build a more unified national

identity before the seeds of insurgency have the opportunity to take hold. The sooner these policies are instituted, the greater the duration of meaningful exposure and cooperation between rival groups is likely to be. Additionally, the more quickly the economic benefits of increased employment, expanded education, and improved infrastructure can be felt, the less likely the chance the country will return to conflict. Also, the longer conflict can be delayed, the greater the chance that peace will remain.⁶⁸

Conclusion

Many developed nations have weighed the pros and cons of universal national service. One consistent argument against incorporating such a policy is that it is “a solution looking for a problem.” In other words, most modern developed nations have economic and political institutions capable of providing people with required services, and the necessary patriotic spirit among professional volunteers to ensure the people’s security. With these institutions firmly in place, a national service program is unnecessary.⁶⁹ However, if this argument is valid, then the opposite is also valid: countries that lack these essential institutions may find benefit from a universal national service program.

In countries lacking national unity, universal national service can help to break down barriers between different social and ethnic groups. This change is accomplished by fostering environments that expose service members to the conditions required to allow for intergroup contact to facilitate in-group reappraisal. If properly managed over time, this process has been proven to reduce prejudice and alleviate tensions. Additionally, national service programs can

⁶⁸ Collier and Hoeffler, “Greed and Grievance,” 581. The risk of re-entering war in the year immediately following the termination of active conflict is about 32 percent and decreases by 1 percent for each conflict free year.

⁶⁹ Michael Lind, “A Solution in Search of a Problem,” in *United We Stand: National Service and the Future of Citizenship*, ed E.J. Dionne Jr, Kayla Meltzer Crogosz, and Robert E. Liton (Washington D.C., Brookings Institute Press, 2003) 125-126.

lower unemployment rates, build infrastructure, improve education, and foster economic growth. In turn, all of these actions are known to lower a nation's risk of entering into civil war. Such programs can also help gain the loyalty of politically neutral populations and provide stability to nations that have recently experienced conflict, potentially extending periods of peace, which further reduces the risk of a return to violence.

Universal national service is not a universal answer to all the challenges facing developing countries, and it may not always be an appropriate course of action. However, coalitions engaged in nation building efforts should not dismiss the potential benefits of imposing or encouraging some form of universal service just because similar programs would not be deemed appropriate within their own countries. Like any powerful tool, universal service has the potential to cause damage if improperly used, but that does not diminish its utility if properly applied. In cases of nation building within countries with fractured unity or those facing economic decline because of poor stability, infrastructure, and education, universal national service may be the perfect tool for the job.

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http://www.gfk.com/Documents/Press-Releases/2014/GfK_Trust%20in%20Professions_e.pdf.
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