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14. ABSTRACT

World War II serves as an extraordinary example of United States mobilization for total war, as it was the most significant and violent conflict in human history. American policy-makers and military leaders found it challenging to walk the fine line between relying on voluntarism, incentivization, and coercion to lead the war effort. This paper unfolds in 4 parts. First, it examines the relationship between international and domestic context relative to the authority vested in executive agencies charged with coordinating the war production effort. Second, it argues that while American were averse to conscripted labor, government agencies were able to establish a closed system of labor to support war industries, but still incentivized participation in the work force. Third, it contends that policy-makers balanced conscripting men into the armed service with sustaining appropriate levels of workers to maximize war production. Fourth, it concludes that in preparation for the next war, policy-makers and military planners must identify the acceptable and appropriate levels of authority for federal agencies concerning industry and people. Officials must establish a system to effectively and efficiently coordinating labor to maximize the war effort while simultaneously expanding the armed forces. Most importantly, US policy-makers will find it challenging to walk the fine line between relying on voluntarism, incentivization, and coercion to lead the war effort as the international and domestic context changes.

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Executive Summary

Title: Voluntarism, Incentivization, and Coercion: United States Mobilization in World War II.

Author: Major Matthew D. Alvis.

Thesis: American policy-makers found it challenging to walk the fine line between relying on voluntarism, incentivization, and coercion to lead the war effort. United States mobilization during World War II demonstrates that future policy-makers and military planners need to identify the acceptable yet appropriate levels of authority for federal agencies concerning industry and people, effectively and efficiently coordinating labor for war production, and the tensions of rapidly expanding the armed forces were some of the principal challenges in preparing for total war.

Discussion: Before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, United States (US) policy-makers prompted a steady climb towards direct involvement in the war. Except for military conscription, coercive actions against labor and industry by the US Government were unacceptable. The domestic context and distance of the war forced FDR to rely on volunteerism and incentivization regarding industrial conversion to war production. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, energized the US war effort. Executive agencies received the powers to force industrial conversion to war production. The use of coercion by itself failed to maximize production. Incentivization invigorated industrial leaders to maximize production. Conscripting labor remained politically unacceptable, and Congressional opinion remained hostile to the idea of national compulsory service. Tensions rose between the exponential growth of the armed forces and maintaining an adequate labor force. Recruitment campaigns and patriotism stripped highly skilled workers from industry. FDR ended voluntary enlistment to manage the existing labor pool better. Americans had to navigate the administrative system to remain eligible for employment in the war industry. However, their choice to enter the war production labor pool remained. Policy-maker and military planners should understand US involvement in WW II to prepare for the next total war.

Conclusion: Great power competition is intensifying between the United States and China. This competition contains the potential for open conflict and total war. Before military involvement or enemy attack, policy-maker will find it challenging to energize the war effort. Opponents to war will most likely argue that mobilization will ensure a *fait accompli*. Domestic problems will lead the US population to focus inward and question American involvement in another war. The impact of this on the political environment will make preparation for war difficult. Before hostilities, policy-makers will need to rely on volunteerism to establish the industrial and technological framework for war production. Political leaders will need to ensure a draft is publicly acceptable or risk failure. Policy-makers and military planners must identify the acceptable and appropriate levels of authority for federal agencies concerning industry and people. Officials must establish a system to effectively and efficiently coordinating labor to maximize the war effort while simultaneously expanding the armed forces. Most importantly, US policy-makers will need to navigate the fine line between relying on voluntarism, incentivization, and coercion to lead the war effort as the international and domestic context changes.

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Preface

A cursory view of United States history leads many people to believe that the greatest generation enthusiastically participated in World War II. A large part of American lore concerning WWII is that industrial leaders willingly transitioned to war production, people volunteered en masse to work the machines of industry and fill the ranks of the military, and conscripted men happily accepted. The myth persists that the United States was forced into World War II by events beyond our control. However, in my studies of mobilization for war, I found that certain words reverberated in my studies. These words, to name a few, consist of volunteerism, recruitment, coordination, incentivization, coercion, conscription, and force. I realized that mobilization for war was not so simple and that civilian and military leaders relied on volunteerism, incentivization, and coercion to move industry to war production, man the equipment in industry, and expand the military to combat the enemy. However, domestic context and international pressure informed when these tools or a mixture of these mechanisms were appropriate.

I would like to thank my Masters in Military Science mentor, Dr. Lon Strauss, and my Second Reader, Lieutenant Colonel Brian McLean, United States Marine Corps, for their straightforward guidance, care for intellectual development, patience, and mentorship throughout this process. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Paul Gelpi, Dr. Strauss, and LtCol McLean, along with my fellow officers of the Gray Scholars Program - 5,000-year-old mind. I'm once again left with more questions than answers.

Introduction

World War II (WW II) serves as an extraordinary example of United States (US) mobilization for total war, as it was the most significant and violent conflict in human history. Between World War I (WW I) and WW II, there was a diminished appetite amongst most nations for war, but the Axis Powers' aggression urged states to prepare for armed conflict. Japan laid siege to Asia, and European states fell rapidly to the German blitzkrieg. States whose industrial bases stood at a greater distance from combat were able to mobilize their industries and societies for total war. These mobilizations led to victory for the Allied Forces, though not without struggles. A large part of American lore concerning WWII is that industrial leaders willingly transitioned to war production, people volunteered en masse to work the machines of industry and fill the ranks of the military, and conscripted men happily accepted. Although many scholars argue against Americans' enthusiastic temperament to partake in wartime activities and that mobilization for war was a complicated endeavor, this impression persists.

American policy-makers found it challenging to walk the fine line between relying on voluntarism, incentivization, and coercion to lead the war effort. United States mobilization during World War II demonstrates that future policy-makers and military planners need to identify the acceptable yet appropriate levels of authority for federal agencies concerning industry and people, effectively and efficiently coordinating labor for war production, and the tensions of rapidly expanding the armed forces were some of the principal challenges in preparing for total war.

Appropriate and Acceptable Level of Authority

While Americans continued to struggle economically through the 1930s, the US federal government experienced unprecedented growth during the Great Depression. The programs, public work projects, financial reforms, and regulations of the New Deal sought to hedge against the detrimental effect of the depression. By 1938, the worst of the depression passed, yet the New Deal left in place a sizeable federal framework that influenced US public debate as Japan's siege of China and Germany's aggression in Europe spurred American concerns about US involvement in the conflicts. To avoid American entanglement that would lead to war, policy-makers passed the Neutrality Acts of 1935, 1936, and 1937, which prohibited selling war material and lending money to belligerent nation-states.¹ Following the outbreak of war in Europe, policy-makers moved closer to intervention with the legislation of Cash and Carry of September 1939 that replaced the Neutrality Act. With this new policy, allowing for the influx of foreign purchases into American industry, companies began to absorb some of the unemployed. Cash and Carry effectively ended the arms embargo and paved the way for President Franklin D. Roosevelt's (FDR) Lend-Lease program. Following Germany's defeat of France, the Senate and Congress passed the Selective Service and Training Act of 1940 for continental defense.² Moving even closer to involvement in March 1941, Congress passed the Lend-Lease Act under which the US could loan or lease war materials to any state deemed vital to the US's defense while still maintaining its official neutrality.³ The Lend-Lease policy and the

¹ The United States at War, the Development and Administration of the War Program by the Federal Government, 1946, Committee of Records of War Administration, 5-10.

² Franklin D. Roosevelt, The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt: War and Aid to Democracies, comp. Samuel I. Rosenman (New York: The MacMillan Co. 1941),

³ The United States at War, the Development and Administration of the War Program by the Federal Government, 1946, Committee of Records of War Administration, 44-50.

US Armed Forces' rearmament triggered an exponential expansion of the US industrial capabilities to meet wartime demands.

Throughout the war, the US government's approach to managing industry and labor shifted between volunteerism, incentivization, and compulsory coordination. Initially, a voluntary and peacetime industrial and manpower management sufficed for US participation in World War II due to surplus labor and a general lack of industrial infrastructure. The policy adopted in recruiting human resources resembled those applied in mobilizing industry, in that wherever possible, the US Government relied on voluntary or incentivized compliance.⁴ FDR believed in a delicate approach concerning the control over a person's job. Compulsion might make workers resentful, and their morale would drop, which would negatively impact production efforts. In early 1942, FDR expressed the notion of "voluntary cooperation" regarding workers.⁵ In later years, rising demands for production and a shrinking labor pool required planned and integrated programs. The Executive Branch operated programs to stabilize essential employment by controlling workers' movement between jobs, directing labor forces to top priority production channels, and limiting employment levels in less critical activities not related to war production.⁶ Finding a way to manage the war effort was a trial-and-error ordeal. Throughout US involvement in the conflict, FDR's war organizations transitioned from advisory roles to mature coordinating and oversight agencies (Figure 1).⁷ To effectively direct the rapid expansion of industry and the labor force, FDR needed governmental institutions with the appropriate and

⁴ Richard Polenberg. "War and Society; the United States, 1941-1945." (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972), 20.

⁵ Richard Polenberg. "War and Society; the United States, 1941-1945." (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972), 20.

⁶ A Short History of the War Manpower Commission. US Dept. of Labor. (Technical Service Division, Washington DC, 1948), 11.

⁷ The United States at War, the Development and Administration of the War Program by the Federal Government, 1946, Committee of Records of War Administration, 39.

publicly acceptable authority to institute business and labor controls. These governmental institutions took the form of various boards, bureaus, agencies, and offices.

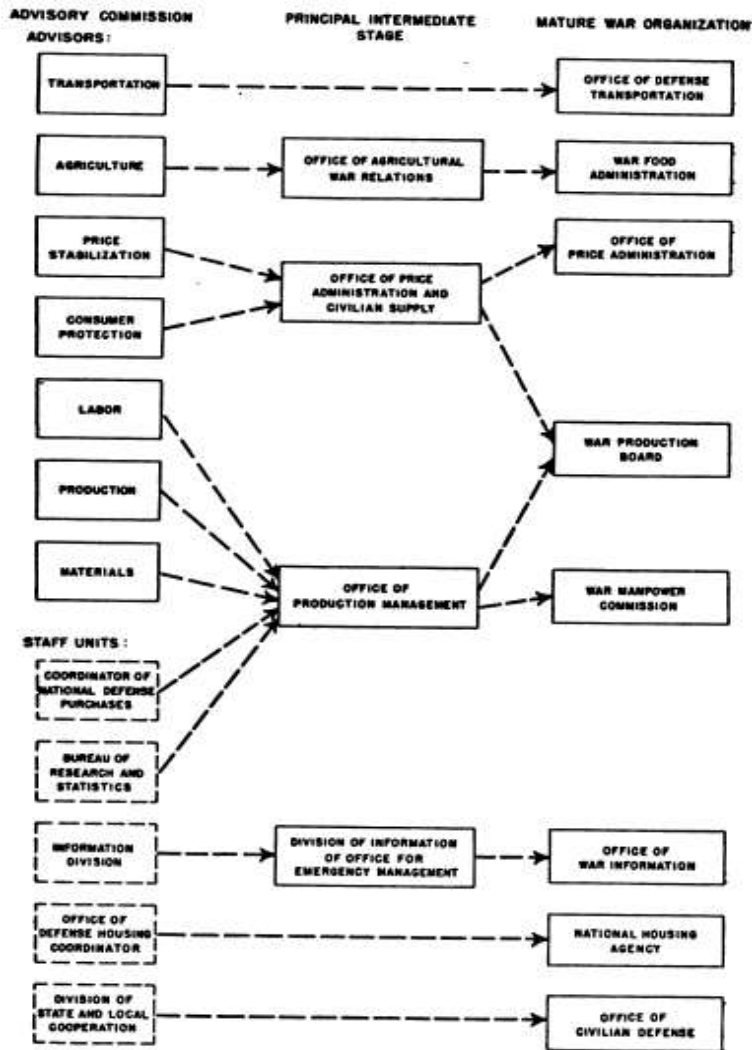
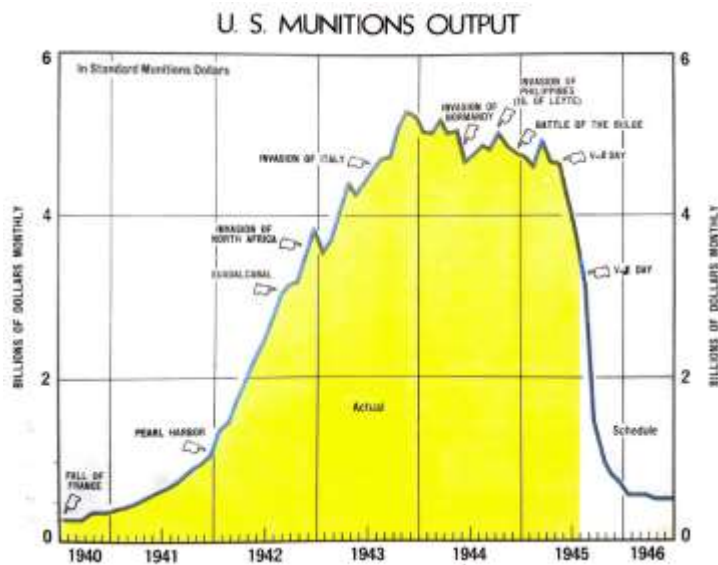


Figure 1: Development of US War Organization during WW II

The first attempt at direction came in 1939 with FDR’s establishment of the short-lived War Resource Board (WRB).⁸ He established the WRB to advise the Army and Navy Munitions Board to review and complete the Industrial Mobilization Plan and provide a comprehensive report concerning US involvement in major war. Following the submission of

⁸ The United States at War, the Development and Administration of the War Program by the Federal Government, 1946, Committee of Records of War Administration, 16.

its report, the WRB completed its principal service. In the concluding paragraph of the report, the WRB noted that if the US were not engaged in war, a board such as the WRB reserved no power nor executive responsibility, but if FDR desired the WRB would continue to serve in an advisory capacity to the Army and Navy Munitions Board.⁹ FDR disbanded the WRB in mid-1939. Concerned about antiwar sentiment and wary of excessive planning for mobilization, FDR withheld his support to maintain the WRB, since the action required new legislation and would potentially impact his platform in the 1940 presidential election.¹⁰ For the President to successfully fulfill the September 1939 Cash and Carry Act obligations, a robust coordinating body was required. In the fall of 1939, the President sidestepped Congressional legislation to manage industrial mobilization since such legislation might set off a partisan debate that could restrict his war effort. But, the President’s mobilization mechanisms existed within the statutory framework.



Graph 1: US Munitions Output from July 1940 to July 1946

⁹ <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/letter-thanking-the-war-resources-board-1939>

¹⁰ Maury Klein. *A Call to Arms: Mobilizing America for World War II* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013), 31.

From July to September of 1940, US munitions production remained stagnant at \$250 million of output per month (Graph 1).¹¹ To energize production growth, FDR needed a coordinating executive body. Executive authority remained from World War I to establish a Council of National Defense, which consisted of the Secretaries of War, Navy, Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, and Labor. Executive authority also enabled FDR to appoint the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense. On May 28, 1940, the President announced the Advisory Commission's establishment, which consisted of advisors on industrial material, industrial production, employment, farm products, transportation, price stabilization, and consumer protection.¹² Although technically, the Commission was supposed to advise the Council, in reality, it advised the President. Along with staff and subordinate organizational growth, the Commission became the National Defense Advisory Commission (NDAC).¹³ Even with the growing threat of US involvement in the war, FDR established the NDAC when American involvement seemed remote, and many industry leaders were unwilling to convert to war production.

Stimulating the building or expansion of production plants remained elusive. Private enterprises were unwilling to invest money in plants to produce armaments for a war that might not come. Reliance on private capital for new construction, plant expansion, and the potential of idle materials placed considerable financial risk on private enterprises.¹⁴ Compounding the issue, Senator Nye's mid-1930s two-year investigation into the financial interest and

¹¹ Report to Chairman, War Production Board, *Wartime Production Achievements and the Reconversion Outlook*, Washington: US Govt. Print. Off., 1945, 13. The dollar amount provided is stated in Standard Munitions Dollars of 1945.

¹² *The United States at War, the Development and Administration of the War Program by the Federal Government*, 1946, Committee of Records of War Administration, 22

¹³ *The United States at War, the Development and Administration of the War Program by the Federal Government*, 1946, Committee of Records of War Administration, 21-25

¹⁴ *The United States at War, the Development and Administration of the War Program by the Federal Government*, 1946, Committee of Records of War Administration, 26

profiteering of businessmen in WWI left business leaders reluctant to become involved in war manufacturing.¹⁵ Along with this hesitancy, the recovering economy brought forth greater civilian demand for goods, and manufacturers sought to capitalize on a wave of fresh consumerism. The NDAC's Advisor on Industrial Production and Coordinator of Purchases initially persuaded few businessmen to take war contracts. To move industrial leaders in the proper direction of NDACs advice required FDR to incentivize the transition to war production. Within a month of the NDAC's establishment, FDR signed incentivization legislation to augment the NDAC.

The Reconstructive Finance Corporation Act of 1932 established the Reconstruction Finance Corporation's (RFC) creation. Before the war, the RFC provided financial support to state and local governments through loans to reinvigorate the economy. On June 25, 1940, FDR signed congressional legislation 54 Stat. 573, which empowered the RFC to make loans or purchase any corporation's capital stock with the President's approval. The RFC could make loans for plant construction, expansion, equipment, and working capital for manufacturing and supplies. As an added incentive to industrial leaders, the RFC could create corporations to lease land, build, expand, and equip plants, then subsequently lease them to private corporations.¹⁶ The RFC inclusion crossed paths with the use of cost-plus-fixed-fee (CPFF) contracts. CPFFs provided business leaders compensation of cost defined by the contract, plus a fee calculated as a percentage of the estimated cost and a fixed dollar amount. The US Government carried the risk of variations in allowable cost, and the fee remained constant even if the cost of the contract

¹⁵ The United States at War, the Development and Administration of the War Program by the Federal Government, 1946, Committee of Records of War Administration, 25. The Senate Munitions Investigation Committee investigate the banking and financial interest that influenced US involvement in WW I and examined the profits and operations of industrial and commercial businesses which supplied munitions to the Allies. Senator Gerald Nye served as the head of the committee.

¹⁶ The United States at War, the Development and Administration of the War Program by the Federal Government, 1946, Committee of Records of War Administration, 26-27

differed from the estimate.¹⁷ In basic terms, CPFFs fixed the profit of contracts regardless of cost, which made government manufacturing contracts lucrative and highly desirable for manufacturers. The RFC and CPFFs crossed path with depreciation tax law which together moved industrial leaders towards war production. In 1939, before the NDAC and RFC, public and private funds amounted to \$241 million invested in industrial development. By the end of 1940, industrial leaders invested \$424 million in industrial expansion. In the same year, the Government spent \$145 million of public funds on industrial expansion. (Table 1).¹⁸

NEW CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY IN THE UNITED STATES, 1939-1945
[Millions of dollars]

	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945 (est.)
TOTAL CONSTRUCTION.....	6,302	6,830	10,758	13,434	7,732	3,935	4,500
Total Public.....	2,411	2,574	5,442	10,669	6,144	2,353	1,985
Total Private.....	3,891	4,256	5,316	2,765	1,588	1,582	2,515
Military.....	119	337	1,756	5,060	2,423	720	515
Army.....	89	270	1,411	3,934	1,559	319	260
Navy.....	30	67	345	1,126	864	401	255
Industrial.....	241	569	2,028	3,806	2,198	982	1,280
Public.....	14	145	1,350	3,485	1,973	748	640
Private.....	227	424	678	321	225	234	640

(Table 1: New Construction Activity in the US, 1939-1945)

The growing national effort that the March 1941 Lend-Lease Act initiated, required a more extraordinary governmental machinery than the NDAC to coordinate and oversee the physical means of production. To meet the impending Lend-Lease's demands, FDR established the Office of Production Management (OPM) in January 1941. OPM assumed the Advisory Commission and the Coordinator of National Defense Purchase role concerning industrial production, raw materials, and priorities and activities of national defense purchases.¹⁹

¹⁷ Robert Braucher and Covington Hardee. "cost-reimbursement Contracts with the United States." (Stanford Law Review 5, no. 1, 1952), 8 -12.

¹⁸ Report to Chairman, War Production Board, Wartime Production Achievements and the Reconversion Outlook, Washington: US Govt. Print. Off., 1945, 33.

¹⁹ The United States at War, the Development and Administration of the War Program by the Federal Government, 1946, Committee of Records of War Administration, 53.

Executive order also transferred the Advisor on Employment and the Bureau of Research and Statistics to OPM.²⁰ Unlike the Advisory Commission's decentralized control between seven advisors, the President centralized OPM control under two men. Now a coordinating powerhouse, OPM carried the directives of the NDAC and the influence of the RFC.²¹ However, giving the OPM complete control over the war production effort remained elusive.

The War and Navy Departments maintained authority to list requirements and issue contracts for armaments. Regarding military production, OPM could only survey, analyze, and summarize military requirements. It could not change the ordered number of armaments but merely criticize the Departments' orders and purchases to encourage alignment of military needs, industrial output, and raw materials.²² The War and Navy Departments' habit of flooding the market with contracts or over-contracting, along with manufacturers' focus on civilian goods, strained available raw materials and thwarted armament output to meet the Lend-Lease Act's demands. OPM lacked the power to force manufacturers to place its request above US military and civilian desires. This problem and manufacturers' refusal to convert to war production left OPM unable to fulfill its directive. One such industrial sector, Automobile manufacturers, refused to convert to war production, which led FDR to activate coercive powers through the Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply (OPACS).

Automobile manufacturers refused to convert their factories to wartime production based on growing civilian demand for vehicles. The continued production of civilian vehicles placed strains on raw materials and labor, which negatively affected war production. The lack of war

²⁰ The United States at War, the Development and Administration of the War Program by the Federal Government, 1946, Committee of Records of War Administration, 53.

²¹ The United States at War, the Development and Administration of the War Program by the Federal Government, 1946, Committee of Records of War Administration, 21-25.

²² The United States at War, the Development and Administration of the War Program by the Federal Government, 1946, Committee of Records of War Administration, 55.

production led FDR to take action to force conversion in industry. FDR activated coercive powers through the OPACS to combat automobile overproduction and overproduction in other sectors. This office absorbed the staff and expanded the functions of the advisor on price stabilization from NDAC. OPACS linked price control with civilian supply to align scarce materials with military demand. OPACS ability to control and distribute scarce materials enabled it to stop nonessential manufacturing and guide supplies to only the most critical civilian uses.²³ On July 20, 1941, Leon Henderson, the head of OPACS, announced a drastic reduction of civilian vehicle production by fifty percent. Henderson publicly admitted that "the program might create some unemployment and disrupt the economy, but the reduction was required 'by severe shortages of steel, nickel, copper, rubber, and other basic materials.' He later admitted the other purpose was to force conversion to war production."²⁴ The authority to prioritize and coordinate the distribution of raw materials gave OPM the ability to control industrial focus. The capability to withhold raw material from civilian or war products meant that OPACS, with information from OPM, could better bend industrial leaders to its will. OPM, along with various other agencies, successfully facilitated meeting the needs of the time. Fifteen percent of industrial output was already committed to war production when the US declared war on Japan and Germany in December of 1941.²⁵ OPM, along with the RFC, drastically influenced industrial expansion. By the end of 1941, the RFC committed \$1.4 billion, and industry spent \$678 million on new industrial construction. (Table 1).²⁶ US munition output expanded from \$1 billion in December 1941 to \$1.4 billion in February 1942.

²³ The United States at War, the Development and Administration of the War Program by the Federal Government, 1946, Committee of Records of War Administration, 56-57.

²⁴ Barton Bernstein, "The Automobile Industry and the Coming of the Second World War.", *The Southwestern Social Science Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (1966), 28.

²⁵ The United States at War, the Development and Administration of the War Program by the Federal Government, 1946, Committee of Records of War Administration, 103-104.

²⁶ Report to Chairman, War Production Board, *Wartime Production Achievements and the Reconversion Outlook*, Washington: US Govt. Print. Off., 1945, 33.

(Graph 1).²⁷ However, Roosevelt announced new and significant production goals in January 1942 that deeply challenged OPM.

FDR established highly ambitious production goals for the war production effort in his January 6, 1942 State of the Union address. The President directed that 60,000 planes should be produced in 1942 and 125,000 in 1943; that 45,000 tanks be produced in 1942 and 75,000 in 1943; that 20,000 anti-aircraft guns be produced in 1942 and 35,000 in 1943; that 6,000,000 deadweight tons of merchant ships be built in 1942, and 10,000,000 in 1943.²⁸ Before Roosevelt's announcement, many industrial leaders already converted their plants to war production. Nevertheless, FDR's magnificent production goals required a governmental organization with greater power and centralized control to coordinate this massive production effort.

The OPM established the administrative framework for a more extensive control organization with more authoritative powers to coordinate the industrial war effort effectively. Empowered by the First War Powers Act, FDR established the War Production Board (WPB) in January 1942 with Executive Order No. 9024.²⁹ He centralized authority over war procurement and production under one powerful individual, Donald M. Nelson, Chairman of the WPB. In addition to supervising OPM and the Supply Priorities and Allocations Board, the President ordered federal departments to comply with Mr. Nelson's policies and plans. The Board directed the conversion of industries to war, allotted materials, established distribution priorities of resources, and barred nonessential production such as new civilian vehicles and luxury

²⁷ Report to Chairman, War Production Board, *Wartime Production Achievements and the Reconversion Outlook*, Washington: US Govt. Print. Off., 1945, 13. The dollar amount provided is stated in Standard Munitions Dollars of 1945.

²⁸ Franklin D. Roosevelt, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt: Humanity on the Defensive*, comp. Samuel I. Rosenman (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1950), 57.

²⁹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt: Humanity on the Defensive*, comp. Samuel I. Rosenman (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1950), 54.

items.³⁰ Equally important, FDR ordered the Army-Navy Munitions Boards to report to him through Mr. Nelson thereby giving the Chairman control over munitions contracts.³¹ These organizational changes streamlined debate, consultation, and board actions to make the WPB more effective than the OPM. The establishment of the WPB, along with the Second War Powers Act of March 1942, provided FDR more extraordinary powers to gain effectiveness and efficiency in industrial manufacturing.

The Second War Powers Act of March 1942 provided FDR the ability to compel business leaders to accept war production contracts and meet production requirements. The Act granted the WPB almost limitless power to control and allocate material resources such as petroleum, chemicals, aluminum, rubber, and steel. Title VI of the Act gave FDR the power to seize property for the defense of the US.³² The US government could requisition plants where production bottlenecks or manufacturing delays threatened critical wartime production goals. Furthermore, the Government could seize plants where recalcitrant business leaders failed to adhere to federal directives. Between 1941 and 1945, the Government seized at least 64 companies.³³ The federal seizure of uncooperative companies and the ability to control strategic resources serve as a credible threat, which enabled FDR to achieve war production goals in concert with incentivization tools.

The Government continued to incentivize industrial conversion to war manufacturing. Agreements to convert factory production gave manufacturers access to low-cost loans, tax write-offs, subsidies, and advantageous depreciation regulations. The Government continued to

³⁰ Franklin D. Roosevelt, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt: Humanity on the Defensive*, comp. Samuel I. Rosenman (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1950), 56-60.

³¹ *The United States at War, the Development and Administration of the War Program by the Federal Government, 1946*, Committee of Records of War Administration, 105.

³² <https://uscode.house.gov/statviewer.htm?volume=56&page=181>

³³ <https://www.historyassociates.com/the-history-and-use-of-the-defense-production-act-part-1/>

offer CPMF contracts and lease newly built factories at increasingly lower rates to entice companies into maximum war production. Incentivization, the threat of plant seizure, and the coordinating abilities of WPB led to its success. By the conclusion of 1942, 54 percent of industrial output was war material. At the end of 1943, 66 percent of industrial output was war material.³⁴ US munitions output reached its monthly peak of \$5.4 billion in November 1943. (Graph 1).³⁵ Industrial capacity continued to expand. In 1942, \$3.8 billion of public and private funds were invested in industrial expansion. In 1943, \$2.2 billion of public and private were invested in industrial expansion. (Table 1).³⁶ The RFC and industry's decline in investment between 1942 and 1943 indicates that conversion and maximized output were nearing convergence with war material demands. Aligned with the expansion of industrial output, the Executive Branch sought better human resource management in war production.

Effectively and Efficiently Coordinating Labor for War Production

Initially, volunteerism filled the workspaces made available by the growing industrial base. Workers welcomed the conversion since it brought about an end to the pervasive unemployment of the 1930s. The labor force expanded immensely to meet the massive demands of production. Before America's direct involvement in the conflict, and even in the initial years of US involvement in the war, the available labor pool was more than adequate. In the spring of 1940, approximately 8 million unemployed people were seeking work. War industries rapidly depleted the unemployed pool. Between July 1940 and July 1944, the industrial labor force increased by 19.4 million people. By the end of the war, the workforce

³⁴ The United States at War, the Development and Administration of the War Program by the Federal Government, 1946, Committee of Records of War Administration, 104.

³⁵ Report to Chairman, War Production Board, Wartime Production Achievements and the Reconversion Outlook, Washington: US Govt. Print. Off., 1945, 13.

³⁶ Report to Chairman, War Production Board, Wartime Production Achievements and the Reconversion Outlook, Washington: US Govt. Print. Off., 1945, 33.

swelled to 66.6 million people, and unemployment decreased by 7.4 million people.³⁷ Mass migration of workers looking for better jobs accompanied this expansive growth on a scale never witnessed previously. Five million four hundred thousand people moved away from farmland, but 2.5 million people moved away from cities. One million southerners went north while 600,000 northerners went south. Nearly 1.4 million people migrated to California to capitalize on war industry jobs in shipyards, aircraft plants, and munition factories.³⁸ This extraordinary migration of people brought together masses of unskilled workers, individuals not traditionally in the workforce, and limited skilled craftsmen. Mass migration of people alongside increased employment, the concentration of workers in urban areas, and military inductions presented significant challenges in the efficient and effective management of workers for the WPB. These challenges included local labor market and skilled worker shortages, unchecked volunteering of men into the armed service, labor turnover and absenteeism in the war industries, and a general shortage of workers entering the labor pool.

The Secretary of Labor was part of the Advisory Commission in May 1940. In this initial period of the war, the US retained a vast labor pool. The Labor Divisions' principal responsibility was to train unskilled workers for skilled jobs where labor shortages appeared. OPM absorbed the Labor Division, and it expanded to assume greater responsibility as the labor pool declined. After the US Congressional declaration of war against Japan and Germany, the demand for production increased significantly, which placed considerable performance pressure on the workforce. The alignment of available plants, declaration of war, and the President's radical production announcement in 1942, signaled a need to better coordinate labor. In spring 1942, FDR established the WPB's human resource branch, the War Manpower Commission

³⁷ A Short History of the War Manpower Commission. US Dept. of Labor. (Technical Service Division, Washington DC, 1948), 4.

³⁸ Richard Polenberg. "War and Society; the United States, 1941-1945." (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972), 139.

(WMC).³⁹ The WMC was the conglomerate of various programs to mobilize, direct, and coordinate the national labor force and balance the labor needs of agriculture, industry, and the armed forces. Concurrent to the creation of the WMC, industrial leaders and policy-makers sought legislation for national workforce conscription.

Local labor market and skilled workers shortages led to legislation for compulsory workforce controls. In September 1942, Senator Austin introduced bill S.2805, which would empower Selective Service Boards to assign any man between 18 and 65 to production work. In effect, Selective Service Boards, in concert with the WMC, would conscript registrants into industrial labor positions. In a hearing before the Committee on Military Affairs, WMC Chairman Paul V. McNutt sighted the burgeoning staffing difficulties. According to Chairman McNutt, there were acute shortages of all labor types in 40 major war production centers. The severe labor shortage did not merely mean that employers found it challenging to find employees. The early and rapid expansion of local labor supply created a pattern where workers moved to an area in response to higher wages and left after several weeks due to adverse work and housing conditions. Chairman McNutt cited a concerning estimate that an employer must hire 6000 workers to increase their long-term workforce by 2500.⁴⁰ Skilled workers often resided in less labor-intensive nonessential industries, which meant their manufacturing experience did not support the war production effort, and they were not in positions to manage and train unskilled workers in munition manufacturing. Adding to the issue, unskilled workers left for higher wages once they acquired skills, thereby stripping industries of newly skilled

³⁹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt: Humanity on the Defensive*, comp. Samuel I. Rosenman (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1950), 200 -204.

⁴⁰ Senate Committee on Military Affairs, *Hearings to the Committee on Bills relating to the Manpower of the United States*. 77th Cong., 1942, Committee Print, 15-22.

workers.⁴¹ However, conscripting labor remained politically unacceptable, and Congressional opinion remained hostile to the idea of national compulsory service. Therefore, bill S.2805 failed to pass into legislation. Throughout the war, advocates could not overcome American ideals of freedom and liberty that made the concept of conscripted labor unpalatable. However, Representatives introduced bills of a similar nature through 1943 that also failed to pass into legislation.⁴² Nevertheless, policy-makers reorganized administrative structures within WMC to make available the right people for industry and the armed forces.

When it became evident that Congress was not receptive to giving compulsory labor controls to the WMC, FDR did not pursue the issue further. In early 1942, Chairman McNutt requested that the WMC control labor utilization, new hires, and the Selective Service System. FDR approved McNutt's request and strengthened the WMC with Executive Order No. 9279 on December 5, 1942. Executive Order No. 9279 committed the Administration to a program of mobilizing civilian labor through voluntary methods rather than punitive sanctions since such action could prove politically challenging. To better manage the workforce, paragraph four effectively ended voluntary enlistments so that the Chairman of the WMC could manage deferments to determine who entered the labor pool for war industries and who entered the armed forces, thereby ensuring skilled workers were retained for industry. Paragraph five of the order gave the Chairman the power to control who entered the war industry workforce, how and when they moved between jobs, and which employers receive new hires. Paragraph five also provided the Chairman with the powers to take all lawful and appropriate steps to ensure that the US Employment Service (USES) controlled all hiring, rehiring, solicitation, and recruitment

⁴¹ Senate Committee on Military Affairs, *Hearings to the Committee on Bills relating to the Manpower of the United States*. 77th Cong., 1942, Committee Print, 15-22.

⁴² A Short History of the War Manpower Commission. US Dept. of Labor. (Technical Service Division, Washington DC, 1948), 34.

of workers in or for work in any establishment, plant, facility, occupation, or area designated by the Chairman. Paragraph 5 stated that no employer shall retain workers whose services were urgently needed in any establishment, plant, facility, occupation, or area designated by the Chairman as more essential or risk losing defense contracts.⁴³ Even though the system was voluntary, it had coercive attributes due to its control of the placement and movement of people who wished to remain employed in war industries. However, people's entry into and out of employment remained voluntary for all workers. The issue of compulsory service in labor returned several times following this but never gained traction.⁴⁴ However, the WMC did implement indirect compulsory actions with industrial labor when labor shortages, worker turnover, and absenteeism affected critical war material output.

In 1943, the National Aircraft War Production Council received west coast plant managers' warnings that aircraft output was limited to 80,000 of the required 95,000. Labor turnover was one primary reason for this inability to meet demand. Four out of ten people stayed on the job less than a year due to the availability of higher wages elsewhere, poor working conditions, and lack of housing.⁴⁵ The saturation of people along the west coast made growing the local labor pool near impossible.⁴⁶ The labor turnover issue was not much greater than that of other industries of munitions and non-munitions. However, the 8th Air Force's resource-intensive initiation of bombardment in Europe focused the WPB efforts on aircraft production.⁴⁷ One reason for turnover was "manpower pirating." Manpower pirating was the

⁴³ <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/executive-order-9279-providing-for-the-most-effective-mobilization-and-utilization>.

⁴⁴ A Short History of the War Manpower Commission. US Dept. of Labor. (Technical Service Division, Washington DC, 1948), 34.

⁴⁵ Richard Polenberg. "War and Society; the United States, 1941-1945." (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972), 22.

⁴⁶ Byron Fairchild and Jonathan Grossman. "The Army and Industrial Manpower." (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, Dept. of the Army, 1959), 257.

⁴⁷ Byron Fairchild and Jonathan Grossman. "The Army and Industrial Manpower." (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, Dept. of the Army, 1959), 131; 139-144.

practice of industrial managers offering other plants' workers higher wages to gain the workforce required to receive defense contracts. The practice habitually disrupted production since many managers hoarded pirated workers in preparation for upcoming contracts, which affected other contractors' ability to meet the labor needs for their contracts. Not until late 1943 was a partial solution found with the West Coast Manpower Program (WCMP).

In early 1943, labor shortages in Buffalo, NY, led the regional director of the WMC to develop a controlled referral plan. This plan operated on the two principles that unemployed workers required a certificate for employment by the USES to work in factories certified by the WMC, and workers could only switch jobs with permission of their employer or the WMC if they wanted to remain in the workforce.⁴⁸ This system informed the development of the WCMP.

In late 1943, the WMC, in concert with the War Department, developed the WCMP to alleviate the aircraft industry's labor problems. Under this plan, regionally aligned committees with representatives from the WMC and the War Department fixed employment ceilings and job priorities which aligned jobs with USES worker referrals.⁴⁹ The WCMP instituted an indirect coercive debit and credit approach to managing the labor force. The WCMP mandated that all hiring required approval of USES. This system made labor management a closed system in which workers needed approved employment referrals to work war industries. The WCMP remained acceptable due to its voluntary attributes. The program did not force people to work, but if workers wished to remain eligible for employment within the area, they could not switch jobs without central employment service consent. Moreover, the WCMP required

⁴⁸ Maury Klein, *A Call to Arms: Mobilizing America for World War II* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013), 547-549.

⁴⁹ Byron Fairchild and Jonathan Grossman. "The Army and Industrial Manpower." (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, Dept. of the Army, 1959), 257.

industrial managers to hire only workers with referrals to remain eligible for defense contracts. No one forced workers to change jobs, and the Government did not force employers to hire anyone.⁵⁰ The plan to manage industrial labor on the west coast met its challengers from the labor union and industry leaders, but its success led to its use in other industrial regions.

The WMCP led to success in achieving production goals in Seattle, and the WMC sent teams to Los Angeles and San Diego to facilitate its implementation in those areas. In the 4th quarter of 1943, aircraft production rose to a high-water mark of \$5 billion.⁵¹ This success led to the plan's adoption, though with alterations in all war industry regions. By the end of 1943, the WPB established forms of the WCMP in the ten most critical labor areas.⁵² The US Army began to gain the initiative in Europe following the mid-1943 invasion of Italy, and planning and preparation for the Allied invasion of Normandy was well underway, which required a continued expansion of the labor force to meet war material demands. This increasing demand led to a greater want by industry and executive leaders to transfer workers between industrial plants.⁵³ The lack of male workers who would transfer plants, absenteeism, and worker turnover led to compulsory labor legislation that included both men and women.

At the beginning of the war, defense jobs went first to men. Conscription and growing employment quickly drained the pool of available men. By 1942, the defense industry absorbed the women who wanted to work. The WMC estimated that to keep farms and factories operating at the maximum capacity required employing 5 million women by the end of 1943.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Richard Polenberg, "War and Society; the United States, 1941-1945." (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972), 22.

⁵¹ The United States at War, the Development and Administration of the War Program by the Federal Government, 1946, Committee of Records of War Administration, 319.

⁵² Industrial Mobilization for War: History of the War Production Board and Predecessor Agencies, 1940-1945. V1, Program and Administration, Washington: (US Gov't Print Office, Washington DC 1947),708.

⁵³ Byron Fairchild and Jonathan Grossman. "The Army and Industrial Manpower." (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, Dept. of the Army, 1959), 258.

⁵⁴ Byron Fairchild and Jonathan Grossman. "The Army and Industrial Manpower." (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, Dept. of the Army, 1959), 170.

By mid-1943, the growing industrial capacity to meet the demands of the Lend-Lease Act led to an acute workforce shortage and subsequent decline in production output. By late 1943, the labor shortage was severe enough to warrant the need for more women to enter the workforce to serve in their local area. Some measures to bring these women into the workforce took the form of conscription. Senator Austin introduced bill SB 666, which proposed a compulsory system of selective war service for both men and women.

Bill S.B. 666 (The National War Service Act) called for the compulsory registration of women 18 to 50. The National War Service Act would enable the Federal Government to induct women and men registered for the draft into industrial or agricultural work.⁵⁵ The congressional debate of S.B. 666 centered around whether conscription aligned with democratic principles and on the lack of mechanisms to facilitate labor transfer. Congressional debate paid little attention to women's conscription and instead questioned the impact on women's role in household management.⁵⁶ Bill S.B. 666 reignited the great debate over conscription in general, and mixed opinions meant the National War Service Act never came to a vote.⁵⁷ The necessity to include women in industrial labor grew throughout the war due to the continued induction of men into the military and rising industrial output goals, leading to shortages in labor. Congressional unwillingness to conscript women meant the WMC and business leaders would need to rely on recruitment and incentivization efforts to bring more women into war industries. Through recruitment and incentivization, women in the labor force rose from 14.6 million in

⁵⁵ Doris Weatherford, *American Women in World War II* (New York: Facts on File, 1990), 116-118.

⁵⁶ Doris Weatherford, *American Women in World War II* (New York: Facts on File, 1990), 122-123.

⁵⁷ Doris Weatherford, *American Women in World War II* (New York: Facts on File, 1990), 123.

1941 to 19.4 million in 1944.⁵⁸ This 25 percent increase in the female labor pool suggests that the WMC did not need to conscripting labor but recruit and incentivize potential workers.

Attempts of the WMC to maximize the effective and efficient utilization of the available labor pool took various forms. Throughout the war, industrial leaders and policy-makers sought labor conscription. However, the domestic context and political environment never supported the coercive endeavors regarding workers. Business leaders did not always want the government oversight that labor conscription might bring with it. Recruitment and incentivization were critical tools for WMC to use regarding labor. Policy-makers' role in managing industrial labor evolved into establishing and maintaining bureaucratic systems that coordinated to maximize industrial output and available labor to meet war material requirements. While the general public did not support outright labor coercion, conscription into the armed forces was politically acceptable, especially as US intervention in the war became inevitable.

Tensions Created by Rapidly Expanding the Armed Forces

There is little doubt about the success of the US draft in World War II. In 1939, the US Armed Forces of 174,000 men ranked eighteenth in size between Portugal and Bulgaria.⁵⁹ Following Germany's defeat of France, Congress passed the Selective Service and Training Act of 1940 (SSTA), and FDR signed it into law on September 16, 1940. The SSTA required every male citizen in the US between the ages of 21 and 36 to register on October 16 of the same year.⁶⁰ Over 16 million male citizens and alien residents in the US registered in the initial draft,

⁵⁸ Byron Fairchild and Jonathan Grossman. "The Army and Industrial Manpower." (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, Dept. of the Army, 1959), 172.

⁵⁹ Eric Larrabee, "Commander and Chief: Franklin Delano Roosevelt, His Lieutenants, and their war." (1st ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 114.

⁶⁰ A Manual of Law for use by Advisory Boards for Registrants, Appointed Pursuant to the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 (*Approved September 16*. 1st ed. Washington: US Govt. Print. Off, 1940), 28.

and the military immediately inducted 921,000.⁶¹ Initially, SSTA conformed to the peacetime limitations of 900,000 men in training at any given time and restricted US service members to the Western hemisphere. On December 31, 1940, six days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Congress amended the Act to remove the restriction to the Western Hemisphere and extended military members' service requirement to the war's duration plus six months. The amendment made all men from age 18 until the day before their 45th birthday subject to military service, and all men up to their 65th birthday were required to register with Selective Service.⁶² By mid-1945, 56 million men were registered with the Selective Service, and the armed forces reached the high point of 12.2 million men and women, of which the military inducted 10 million men.⁶³ Achieving this accomplishment was not a simple, straightforward task. Before the war, advocates for and opponents to the draft argued over the validity of peacetime conscription.

In the interwar period between WW I and WW II, many veterans' associations advocated for equality in the burden of war. One prominent organization, the American Legion, believed in the social reform movement of universal military training to inculcate Americans against socialism. Many veterans who served abroad in WW I believed they carried an unfair share of the burden compared to the businessmen and workers that profited from the war and took positions in cushy jobs. Between 1921 and 1931, leaders of the American Legion focused efforts through legislative means to ensure equality of sacrifice in future war through a universal draft. Initially, these efforts sought a universal draft of both manpower and material resources. Unable to gain traction for conscripted labor and capital, Legion leaders dropped the issue and focused

⁶¹ Selective Service in Peacetime, First Report of the Director of Selective Service 1940-1941, Selective Service System, (Govt. Printing Office, Washington DC, 1942), 13 -17.

⁶² "The Anthrope Factor in Warfare: Conscripts, Volunteers, and Reserves." (Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, DC: Mobilization Concepts Development Center, National Defense University, 1988), 175.

⁶³ US at War, 94. And Selective Service in victory, 262

on influencing whom to conscript.⁶⁴ Whereas the Legion championed conscription, rivals argued against its morality and claimed it broke American tradition.

The outbreak of WW II in Europe elevated the debate of military reforms to the national level. Legislators passed the SSTA, but not without opposition to compulsory military service. Several rival factions argued against the draft during the hearings before the House Committee on Military Affairs in July 1940. Monsignor Barry O'Toole of the Catholic University argued that, "if the Federal Government expects of American youth the sacrifice of their liberty, perhaps even their lives, the least it can do is to give them the opportunity, and I emphasize that, to make so great a sacrifice freely, as heroes should, by allowing them to volunteer, to enlist on their own accord."⁶⁵ In short, Monsignor O'Toole argued against the morality of conscription. Some opponents drew concerns about the profound change the draft would bring upon the US. Opponents argued that the war in Europe did not threaten the US, so an enlarged army was unnecessary. Challengers strenuously opposed compulsory training as militaristic and undemocratic. In a statement signed by educators of the Committee on Militarism in Education stated that "the adoption of military conscription in peacetime would be a radical departure from historic American tradition. Never before in American history has it been thought necessary to resort to peacetime conscription for purposes of defense."⁶⁶ Even with these arguments, advocates for compulsory service reinforced by the ever-growing threat of war saw the bill pass in the House of Representatives with a margin of 109 votes. FDR signed it into law on

⁶⁴ Albert A. Blum and J. D. Smyth. "Who should Serve: Pre-World War II Planning for Selective Service." *The Journal of Economic History* 30, no. 2 (1970), 381-382.

⁶⁵ Hearing before the House Committee on Military Affairs on HR 10132, 76th Cong., 3rd Session. (July 30, 1940), 354.

⁶⁶ Carlton Dargusch, *Problems of Selective Service*, (Gov't Print Office, Washington DC, 1952), 50.

September 16, 1940.⁶⁷ Facilitating the draft required a tremendous administrative mechanism that was acceptable to the public.

The Selective Service System (SSS) facilitated registration for the draft. Legislators organized the WW II SSS from the model of WW I draft which corrected the inadequacies of the Civil War draft. Instead of the centralized military organization of the Civil War draft, the WW I SSS established a nonmilitary structure which operated through decentralized boards led by local community leaders. Local Boards acted autonomously with the authority within their jurisdictions, subject to District Board review, of hearing and deciding exemptions for including or discharging individuals or classes from the draft.⁶⁸ Just as in WW I, the WW II Joint Army-Navy Selective Service Board relied upon volunteers that state governors selected.⁶⁹ The use of local community leaders, who reported through a civilian chain of control, gave the SSS a human dimension in which local decision-makers, who understood local conditions and needs to determine whom to draft and defer, made the SSS politically palatable.

The SSS utilized 6443 Local Draft Boards comprised of people from its community.⁷⁰ This far-flung system reached all 3070 US counties from the sparsely populated areas to the congested cities. These local organizations determined the registrant's induction or deferment and maintained a good deal of discretion.⁷¹ State governors were responsible for administering Selective Service laws within their state. Governors delegated tasks to State Directors then to Local Boards, composed of citizens in each community. The Local Board selected men for

⁶⁷ <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/76-3/h216>. A Manual of Law for use by Advisory Boards for Registrants, Appointed Pursuant to the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 (Approved September 16. 1st ed. Washington: US Govt. Print. Off, 1940), 28.

⁶⁸ Carlton Dargusch, Problems of Selective Service, (Gov't Print Office, Washington DC, 1952), 5-7.

⁶⁹ George Q. Flynn, "Selective Service and American African Americans during World War II." *Journal of Negro History* 69, no.1, 1984, 16.

⁷⁰ Selective Service in Peacetime, First Report of the Director of Selective Service 1940-1941, Selective Service System, (Govt. Printing Office, Washington DC, 1942), 10.

⁷¹ Selective Service in Peacetime, First Report of the Director of Selective Service 1940-1941, Selective Service System, (Govt. Printing Office, Washington DC, 1942), 53-55.

induction based on individual cases, the economy, and local industrial needs. Members of these Local Boards lived in the same area of their jurisdiction and, as such, could consider local conditions, labor needs for war production, and more personal consideration when deciding whom to induct and defer based on the joint Army and Navy classification system. This means that people were not conscripted without consideration of their personal issues and contributions to the war effort. The SSS further protected individuals by providing them the ability to appeal the decision of the Local Boards. Initially, deferments by local boards were liberal, and men could volunteer for service. However, voluntary induction into the armed forces drained the pool of many skilled workers, who better supported the war effort in their industrial capacity.

Military recruitment campaigns and patriotism appealed equally to high skilled workers and men in less essential occupations. Skilled men that would best serve the war effort in munitions production left for voluntary enlistment that undermined efficiency in war production. A study based on eight major aircraft companies from January through December 1941 showed that 1,696 workers voluntarily left their jobs to enlist in the armed services compared to 1,460 workers that the draft called for induction.⁷² This problem became worse in 1942 when 26,788 skilled men volunteered compared to 9,365 men that the armed forces inducted.⁷³ The remaining skilled workers aided foremen in the management and training of unskilled workers. The span of management increased as the unskilled industrial labor pool grew. The SSS needed a solution to achieve effectiveness in war production and simultaneously expand the military.

In 1942, the intersection of fulfilling the Lend-Lease Act, FDR's January 1942 production announcement, Navy and Army combat actions in the Pacific, and the Allied

⁷² Carlton Dargusch, *Problems of Selective Service*, (Gov't Print Office, Washington DC, 1952), 54.

⁷³ Carlton Dargusch, *Problems of Selective Service*, (Gov't Print Office, Washington DC, 1952), 54.

Invasion of Africa compelled the WMC to seek a solution to inefficient use of labor while the SSS expanded the military. In early 1942, Chairman McNutt requested that FDR give the WMC control of the SSS. On December 7, 1942, FDR approved McNutt's request and strengthened the WMC with Executive Order No. 9279. In concert with allowing volunteers, the armed forces' use of the draft created shortages in industrial labor. The new order required termination of all voluntary enlistments into the armed service and transferred the SSS to WMC control.⁷⁴ Control of the SSS provided Chairman McNutt power over military induction and allowed him to combat the withdrawal of skilled labor. Little information exists regarding how many skilled workers in industry were retained for 1943. However, in November, the munitions program reached its peak at \$5.4 billion for the month, while the Army neared its largest size of 7.5 million men in December, suggesting that their efforts were successful.⁷⁵ Volunteerism proved to be detrimental to the war effort. Individual choices became slimmer as the war progressed. WMC control over the SSS denied some people the ability to volunteer for service, which placed them in the position of entering a workforce that was largely under the control of USES unless they were willing to enter into entrepreneurial endeavors or the limited position outside of USES control.

The US draft aided in the defeat of the Axis Powers. During the national debate over coercion to fill the ranks, advocates for and opponents to the draft argued over the validity based on both need and morality. The pressure of the ever-growing threat of war gave advocates for compulsory service the upper hand in the argument, which resulted in the passage of the SSTA. However, conscription of men into the armed service needed to be publicly

⁷⁴ Hershey, Lewis B. The 3rd Report of the Director of Selective Service: The Selective Service as the tide of War Turns. (US Govt Printing Office, 1945), 43 – 45.

⁷⁵ Report to Chairman, War Production Board, Wartime Production Achievements and the Reconversion Outlook, Washington: US Govt. Print. Off., 1945, 13. Hershey, Lewis B. The 3rd Report of the Director of Selective Service: The Selective Service as the tide of War Turns. (US Govt Printing Office, 1945), 77.

acceptable. The SSS achieved acceptability through local community leaders' that took into account individual issues and local considerations. The drain of skilled laborers negatively impacted production. The US came to rely on compulsory service alone to grow the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps since volunteerism became unacceptable due to its drain on industrial labor.

Conclusion

During American involvement in WW II, its sheer economic power, vast labor pool, and magnificent industrial capacity provided the much-needed armaments to Allied Forces in contact with the Axis powers. Before US military involvement in the war, FDR ensured that Russia and Great Britain could curtail German efforts, and China could pin Japanese forces in Asia by providing much needed armaments. Before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, US policy-makers prompted a steady climb towards direct involvement in the war. Except for military conscription, coercive actions against labor and industry by the US Government were unacceptable. The domestic context and distance of the war forced FDR to rely on volunteerism and incentivization regarding industrial conversion to war production. Federal management of the labor was not required due to the adequate pool. Legislation and FDR's policies provided the much-needed time to maximize the US economy, industrial output, and the US military. The Peacetime Draft set the base for the exponential growth of the military. However, conscription was publicly acceptable because of the restrictions placed on the use of the military and the cap placed on the number of men who could be forced into service. The direct attack by the Japanese forced changed the domestic context by united the population against an adversary, which made the use of force for the war effort more acceptable.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, energized the US war effort. Executive agencies received the powers to force industrial conversion to war production. The use of coercion by itself failed to maximize production. Incentivization through CPFF contracts, RFC loans and Leases, and attractive depreciation tax laws invigorated industrial leaders to maximize production. Conscripting labor remained politically unacceptable, and Congressional opinion remained hostile to the idea of national compulsory service. However, the WMC instituted a closed labor management system to ensure a high level of war production. Tensions rose between the exponential growth of the armed forces and maintaining an adequate labor force. Recruitment campaigns and patriotism stripped highly skilled workers from industry. FDR ended voluntary enlistment to manage the existing labor pool better. Americans had to navigate the administrative system to remain eligible for employment in the war industry. However, their choice to enter the war production labor pool remained. Policy-maker and military planners should understand US involvement in WW II to prepare for the next total war.

Great power competition is intensifying between the United States and China. This competition contains the potential for open conflict and total war. Before military involvement or enemy attack, policy-maker will find it challenging to energize the war effort. Opponents to war will most likely argue that mobilization will ensure a fait accompli. Domestic problems will lead the US population to focus inward and question American involvement in another war. The impact of this on the political environment will make preparation for war difficult. Before hostilities, policy-makers will need to rely on volunteerism to establish the industrial and technological framework for war production. Unlike WW II, the US maintains the world's largest military, which will serve as the backbone for rapid expansion of the armed forces. However, political leaders will need to ensure a draft is publicly acceptable or risk failure. In

preparation for the next war, policy-makers and military planners must identify the acceptable and appropriate levels of authority for federal agencies concerning industry and people. Officials must establish a system to effectively and efficiently coordinating labor to maximize the war effort while simultaneously expanding the armed forces. Most importantly, US policy-makers will find it challenging to walk the fine line between relying on voluntarism, incentivization, and coercion to lead the war effort as the international and domestic context changes.

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