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THE ELIMINATION OF THE DRAFT REGISTRATION:
MILITARY AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

BY

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UNCLASSIFIED

USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

THE ELIMINATION OF THE DRAFT REGISTRATION:
MILITARY AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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U.S. Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013
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THE ELIMINATION OF THE DRAFT REGISTRATION:
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As a result of the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, President Carter, then in the middle of a tough reelection campaign and humiliated by the Soviet action, turned to draft registration as a both a domestic political and international diplomatic symbol. President Reagan, who had opposed the draft as Governor of California, decided to continue registration in 1982, in response to communist military repression in Poland. In both instances, American Presidents (Democrat and Republican) used draft registration as an instrument of political power to send a strong signal of the United States opposition to communist aggression and U.S. resolve to take further action should the situation demand. Registration and the accompanying "threat" of our resolve to force international changes, through the use of this instrument of political power, did not work. Today, largely due to independent and internal pressures, Russia has withdrawn from Afghanistan and tensions in Poland have all but disappeared. ¹

Why then, do we still have draft registration? Does draft registration make a viable contribution to our

mobilization efforts? Should we continue to fund a program that has not (and many say can not) accomplish its intended purpose? In view of recent initiatives, by Secretary General Gorbachev, can the draft registration be used as a bargaining chip to assist in the culmination of a meaningful agreement? This study will examine these questions in detail and seek to determine the ultimate value of draft registration.

ENDNOTES

1. Doug Bandow, "Drop Draft Registration," Christian Science Monitor, 12 July 1989, p. 18.

THE ELIMINATION OF THE DRAFT REGISTRATION:
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CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

An obvious place to start is with a review of the evolution of our conscription policies, beginning with the American Revolution. This will help in understanding how and why the United States wartime and peacetime requirements culminated in the perceived need for a draft registration.

PAST "CONSCRIPTION" POLICY

During the nearly 215 year history of the United States, we have been engaged in five wars that have been declared by Congress and three that were never formally approved by Congress. The War of 1812, Mexican War (1846-1848), Spanish-American War (1898), World War I (1917-1918), and World War II (1941-1945) were all approved by Congress. The Civil War (1861-1866, Korean Conflict (1950-1953), and Vietnam Conflict (1957-1975) were never officially sanctioned by Congressional law or declaration of war. ¹

The recruitment of military manpower has been one of the most emotional issues throughout our history. The subject of "a draft" has sharply delineated the status of

civil and military relations, during periods of peace as well as war. Because a draft is interpreted in clear and instant terms by those affected, numerous emotionally laden questions, related to constraints on personal liberties, must always be dealt with by the government. Who must serve, as well as complaints involving real and perceived inequities are at the heart of what has become a key issue of the American political scene, ever since the Civil War.²

Prior to the Civil War, military manpower needs were met almost exclusively by volunteers and militia forces. This was clearly the case during the Revolutionary War, which was fought primarily by state militiamen and volunteers enticed to join by bounties of cash payments. Because some states had difficulty raising the required militia or volunteers requested by the Continental Congress, they resorted to a draft. Usually, this consisted of a drawing by lots of all eligible men on the militia muster roles but did not include married men. Thus, the precedent was set early in our history that established the appropriateness of a draft for military service based on the principles of impartiality, selection by lot, and exemption of certain categories of the population.³

As the Revolutionary War ended, the militia concept, as epitomized by the "minutemen", became the cornerstone of the defense posture for the United States of America. As the

19th century began, the militia system appeared to be working, however as the United States approached the period of the War of 1812, problems with the militia system developed. Despite bounties and bonuses of money, land, and clothing for enlisting, sufficient numbers of volunteers could not be recruited.⁴ Additionally, because of an anti-war sentiment, three New England states refused to contribute militia or volunteers to be placed under Federal control. Although Congress was considering imposing a system of national conscription, the War of 1812 ended before the Senate and the House of Representatives could work out a compromise on their two bills.⁵

The period between the War of 1812 and the Civil War, during which the Mexican War was fought, the United States fought its battles with its regular army, state militia, and volunteers. Conscription never became a national issue primarily because of President Polk's announcement that Mexican soldiers had invaded the United States and that American casualties had resulted, which invoked the national support of the people. Although a draft was never considered, the war did result in serious political disagreements concerning United States objectives in going to war with Mexico. The war and associated political dissent resulted in a change from national political parties to regional political factions with distinct interests.

With the election of Abraham Lincoln the stage was set for the Civil War.⁶

As the Civil War began, neither the North or the South had a mobilization plan. Both relied on traditional methods of bounties, bonuses, volunteers, and the militia to satisfy initial manpower requirements. Because the war was not the quick, short battle forecasted by both sides, manpower needs increased and a draft became inevitable. Although both the North and the South soon passed Militia Acts designed to force the states to conscript men to meet quotas, it was not until March 3, 1863 that the North passed the Draft Act. The Draft Act of 1863 authorized the first federal recruitment for military service -- under national direction. Both sides however, made provisions for numerous exemptions and allowed substitutions. This created an informal system similar to that used in later wars by the Selective Service.⁷ Because of real and perceived inequities, there were many anti-draft demonstrations in the North and the South. The North was particularly hard hit with riots in almost every state in the Union.⁸

Next, during the short, four month Spanish-American War in 1898, the draft did not become an issue. Sufficient volunteers made conscription unnecessary. With the successful conclusion of this war, the United States emerged as a world power with important international holdings and

interests. It did not, however, have the military establishment normally associated with a world power. As the United States entered into the 20th century, an anti-imperialist faction surfaced that opposed the way the nation was exercising its new power. ⁹

Although the United States was determined not to be drawn into the emerging European war that was soon to become World War I, several measures were taken to strengthen the military establishment, increase funding, and expand training facilities. Additionally, in 1916 Congress passed the National Defense Act which structured the Army's organization into a Regular Army, Volunteer Army, Reserve Officer's Corp, Enlisted Reserve Corps, and the National Guard. Shortly after the United States declared war in 1917, the need to insure an adequate supply of manpower mandated a return to the draft. Mindful of the abuses and inequities encountered during the Civil War, Congress contemplated authorizing a formal system designed to oversee conscription. As the debate raged, anti-military and anti-draft critics called the proposal "soldier slavery" and argued that the needed manpower could be raised voluntarily. Ultimately, because of a lack of volunteers and the belief by both civilian and military leaders of the need for a strengthened militia system, the Draft Act of 1917 was passed. This law, often called "The Selective Service Law,"

authorized a new entity with the formal and legal responsibility for administering a fair and equitable draft system to satisfy the manpower requirements of the military. The system was not implemented smoothly. As would be the case in future wars, there would be those who did not want to go to war and when drafted, refused to be inducted. The organization that was formed to manage the mobilization of military manpower requirements and which would become inexorably linked with the anti-draft and anti-war movement was the Selective Service System. ¹⁰

THE SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM

As a result of the 1917 law, local draft boards were created consisting of at least three non-military members to handle exemption requests. No bounties or substitutions were authorized. The system consisted of 155 districts and 4,648 local draft boards, which were to administer a program involving registration, selection, and induction. The draft act authorized the president to "conscript" up to 500,000 men as needed, to fill wartime manpower requirements. Although the United States was engaged in "the great war to end all wars," the draft still encountered difficulty. During the first drawing, 50 per cent applied for exemptions, and more than 250,000 men failed to register. In New York 16,000 men were arrested in 1918 for failing to

report after being selected for induction.¹¹ The World War I draft act was discontinued with the signing of the armistice, in 1918. As conscription ended, the United States Army consisted of 3,670,000 men. By 1922, the Army had been reduced to 138,000. Although there was an attempt to establish universal military training and service shortly after World War I, it was defeated by congress and there were no other legislative efforts to establish a draft until the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940.¹²

With the passage of the 1940 Act, local boards were again created to administer the first peacetime draft in the history of the United States. By 1942, the act was amended and registrants were called based on dates of birth, rather than as determined by a lottery. World War II necessitated the reduction of exemptions and inductees were required to serve for the duration of the war plus 6 months. Over 10 million men were drafted during World War II.¹³

The Selective Service Act of 1940 expired in 1947 and there was no draft for a year until the enactment of the Selective Service Act of 1948, which then required service for 21 months for non-veterans between 19 and 26. This act, due to expire in 1950, was extended until 1951 as a result of the Communist invasion of Korea.

In 1951 Congress passed the Universal Military Training and Service Act, which extended the Selective Service System

until 1955 and provided for a service obligation, split between active and reserve duty. In 1955, the Reserve Forces Act extended the Selective Service System and consequently obligation periods for active duty and reserve service. The act was extended again in 1959, 1963, and 1967. ¹⁴

As the Vietnam War became increasingly unpopular, punctuated by the burning of draft cards, marches, riots, and the antiwar movement, draft procedures were changed in 1969, to return to a lottery system. However, the problem of deferments and perceived inequities, that have plagued conscription policy makers since the American Revolution, continued to be a source of opposition to the draft and fuel antiwar sentiments. ¹⁵ In 1973 inductions ceased and in 1975 President Gerald Ford suspended the requirement for registration. Although he had planned to substitute a new system of periodic registration, political opposition killed the proposal and on January 23, 1976 the Selective Service System was placed in "deep standby" status. ¹⁶

FROM THE DRAFT TO REGISTRATION

In late December 1979, Russia invaded Afghanistan ¹⁷ and President Jimmy Carter, in the middle of a tough reelection campaign, called for the resumption of draft registration. Once again, military and political opponents

of conscription voiced concern. Intense debate and a rekindling of antiwar and antidraft sentiments was swift and predictable. As in past wars, the ones most likely effected were the ones most vocal. However, while the primary focus of protest appeared to center around college campuses, there were also protests in urban areas.

President Carter sought registration only. No draft authority was desired, but this did little to satisfy the opposition. After considerable political and public debate, President Carter signed the bill into law on July 2, 1980. It is clear that the measure would not have been approved (or requested) had it not been for the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. Carter, as President and "titular" head of the democratic party (the party of the people), was still opposed to the draft. The sole reason used for registration was to signal our resolve in response to the Russian invasion. ¹⁸ MG (Ret) Thomas Turnage who became Director of the Selective Service in 1981 said:

"... registration signals potential aggressors of our national resolve, it makes war less likely. It is an important element of our national strategy to prevent war and to preserve peace." ¹⁹

Similarly, President Carter said "... resuming registration is an important symbolic act." ²⁰ As a symbol, draft registration was being used as an instrument of power, in support of our foreign policy. It is unclear exactly how

registration, alone, would contribute to eliminating the impact of the Russian invasion. As a symbol of our commitment to do more, the success of this instrument of political power would not be readily apparent for several years to come. In the past, "conscription policy" was used as an instrument of military power. President Carter shifted the focus of "conscription policy" to an instrument of political power.

President Reagan faced a similar dilemma during his presidency. While campaigning, Mr. Reagan had publicly declared he was against a peacetime draft and was sharply critical of President Carter's peacetime registration. After becoming President, he established the Military Manpower Task Force to review this issue. On January 7, 1982, as a result of the conclusion by the Task Force that registration could save "as much as six weeks in mobilizing emergency manpower," President Reagan announced that he was now convinced that "draft registration should be continued."²¹ Perhaps more importantly, it was felt by President Reagan and key members of his cabinet, that it would be a sign of weakness to eliminate the draft in view of the recent communist crackdown in Poland.²²

Today, this legacy of our symbolic resolve, from both the Carter and Reagan administrations, remains. However, the Russians are no longer in Afghanistan and the Solidarity

movement in Poland is experiencing more freedoms than ever.

Why, then, do we still have draft registration and what would be the military implications of its elimination?

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THE ELIMINATION OF THE DRAFT REGISTRATION:
MILITARY AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

CHAPTER III

MILITARY IMPLICATIONS

As stated, U.S. conscription policy in the past, has been an instrument of military policy. Historically this meant that since the revolutionary war, America resorted to the draft as a demonstration of our resolve when militia or volunteer manpower failed to provide the required forces. Since 1979, however, the U.S. conscription policy has been dependent on draft registration alone as a symbol of our national strength and will.¹ To determine the military implications of the elimination of the draft registration, the actual contributions to mobilization readiness must first be analyzed.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS AND CAPABILITIES

The key question in determining the ultimate military value of the draft registration is "what do we gain by a premobilization requirement?" From this viewpoint, registration has never made much military sense.² Even as President Carter was announcing the resumption of draft registration, his Selective Service Director, Bernard

Rostker, was preparing a report arguing against registration of potential draftees, before they were actually needed.³ In analyzing various options the Selective Service director concluded that "the post-mobilization option should substantially exceed Defense requirements, employs the fewest number of full time personnel, and costs the least." More importantly, the report outlined how the Selective Service System was capable of delivering inductees within 17 days after mobilization, without a premobilization registration requirement.⁴ This is in contrast to the 13 day capability, which the Selective Service now indicates exists with the premobilization draft registration requirement.⁵ It is not difficult to understand why the Carter White House moved quickly to bury the draft report and have Selective Service director Rostker "explain" his misinterpretations.⁶ Thus, this author concludes 4 days gained by preregistration inductions, from M+17 to M+13, represents a useless and irrelevant contribution in the event of a mobilization effort.

If the difference was as much as four weeks instead of four days, the mobilization effort would still not be enhanced. The size of the military training base capability is the limiting factor. Registration only saves time and has military value if the earlier inducted draftees can be immediately processed and trained.⁷ There have been

numerous reviews, by a variety of agencies that criticize our training base capacity deficiencies.⁸ This lack of capability continues today.

In discussing the mobilization of thousands of inductees in Part III, "Defense Programs," of the Fiscal Year 1990 Annual Report To Congress, the Secretary of Defense states that "we are currently reviewing our training base capacity to absorb them (inductees)." It is ironic, that in response to past criticism, Defense Department officials still acknowledge the problem and indicate they are reviewing a variety of options -- including "reducing the number of draftees called into service immediately after a crisis."⁹ This does not support an argument for maintaining a premobilization registration, since the primary military purpose is to increase the number of men available for induction and training.

In the event of a crisis, training posts, camps, and stations will be full without draftees. This manpower flow will come from at least four sources. First, there will be the volunteers. During every major crisis, since the American Revolution, thousands of Americans have rushed to volunteer for military service. Second will be the Delayed Entry Program (DEP) participants. These are young men and women who have signed up for military service but requested a delay of up to one year. They could be activated

immediately. Third are Reservists Awaiting Training (RAT). These are principally non-prior service personnel who have enlisted, not yet received training and who could be called for training immediately. Fourth are Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) members. These are reservists who, due to a variety of reasons are no longer in an active troop unit. Because their skills have deteriorated, they must be retrained before being sent into combat.¹⁰ Although there are other manpower sources, the four categories listed are sufficient to demonstrate the initial wartime strain on the training base. Because of the widely documented size/capability deficiencies of the training base, coupled with this readily available manpower, from other sources, a premobilization draft registration clearly does not contribute to the military effort in support of mobilization.

REGISTRATION REALITIES

The major problem of maintaining a list of potential inductees based on a premobilization registration, is the inherent inaccuracies associated with such a list.¹¹

A 1982 General Accounting Office study found:

"... that about 20 percent to 40 per cent of addresses in Selective Service files will be outdated for registrants who turn 20 in any given year. Furthermore, at the end of 8 years, when registrants reach their last year of draft

eligibility, the extent of outdated addresses could reach almost 75 percent."¹²

The report found that about 85 per cent who moved, after registering, did not report address changes. While the Selective Service has made several recent improvements in an attempt to upgrade its compliance program, the young men in this category (18-26) are highly mobile. It is particularly difficult, if not impossible, to maintain accurate, up-to-date registration lists. Without correct mailing addresses, the Selective Service System can not administer a draft equitably¹³ -- a charge that has led to intense public and political debate and discontent in our past periods of war/mobilization.

Perhaps even more important than the basic question of draft equity, is that a failure to maintain current mailing addresses largely negates the ability of the system to provide manpower immediately upon mobilization. Compounding inaccuracies caused by a failure to keep current addresses is the problem of insuring that qualified registrants report when they reach the age of 18. In discussing nonregistrants a Selective Service representative said "there is no way to talk hard figures with a population that changes daily."¹⁴ President Reagan's Military Manpower Task Force admitted that "we don't know how complete peacetime or post-mobilization lists will be at the time inductions are to

begin." 15

Thus, for reasons ranging from questionable time savings using premobilization registration, to existing manpower sources that will be immediately available for filling the training base capacity, to the doubtful accuracy of the current lists, peacetime registration does not appear to serve any vital security need. The military implications of the elimination of draft registration are therefore, insignificant. Clearly the program could be abolished without reducing the mobilization readiness of the United States.

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THE ELIMINATION OF THE DRAFT REGISTRATION:
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CHAPTER IV

POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

For a variety of reasons I believe draft registration is clearly an instrument of political power. A draft, however, is an instrument of military power, but registration, by it self, is not. This distinction becomes clearer, when one analyzes the circumstances under which registration was instituted. If one believes or accepts that draft registration is not an instrument of military power and, as was shown in the last chapter, premobilization registration has little practical value, the next logical question to be examined is what are the potential political implications associated with the elimination of registration!

A FAILED INSTRUMENT OF POLITICAL POWER

Nearly nine years ago, when draft registration was instituted, it was part of a direct response by President Carter to the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. It was meant to be a tangible symbol of U.S. resolve in support of the Afghan resistance and provide pressure on the Russians to terminate the conflict. ¹ In 1982, President Reagan used

the same logic to reply to the communist crack downs in Poland. He believed, to not continue with President Carter's draft registration "would be a sign of weakness at a time when the U.S. was talking tough to the Soviet Union." ²

To determine the success of this instrument, one need only to examine the results. First, the Russians did not depart Afghanistan until February, 1989. Then reasons for this withdrawal had nothing to do with the U.S resumption of a draft registration nine years earlier, but rather a decision as part of a larger internal Russian political strategy, Secretary General Gorbachev's Glasnost (openness) and Perestroika (restructuring) programs. ³ Specifically, as stated in the Secretary of Defense's 1989 edition of Soviet Military Power:

"... the Soviet leadership under Gorbachev recognized that the continued presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan was an obstacle to progress on higher-priority diplomatic and strategic initiatives in East-West relations." ⁴

Second, the Polish situation has dramatically improved with their Soviet masters. How far these recent democratic freedoms will be allowed to progress under the new, enlightened thinking of Gorbachev remains to be seen. It is clear, however, that President Reagan's continuation of the draft registration did not have anything to do with the easing of tensions in Poland with the Soviet Union. ⁵

Because the draft registration did not accomplish the purpose for which it was instituted, it can only be considered a failure as an instrument of political power.

Since it is of no political value (at least for its intended purpose), the obvious question is what are the implications of the elimination of pre-mobilization draft registration? Perhaps the biggest domestic political problem facing the U.S. is the deficit. The elimination of the draft registration would provide a tangible symbol of the administration's resolve to tackle this difficult and pervasive problem. Although monies already spent are a "sunk" cost, the registration system cost approximately \$51 million to establish,⁶ maintenance costs continue to exceed \$10 million a year.⁷ This "maintenance fee" is admittedly, a modest sum when compared to the high finance world of big government, but nevertheless worthwhile when matched with present and future budgetary reductions that must be made. To paraphrase the words of ex-Speaker of the House, Tip O'Neill, "a million here and a million there and pretty soon we are talking about real money!"

Elimination of draft registration would also present the U.S. with a unique "win-win" opportunity internationally. The continued drafting of conscripts by the Soviet Union is coming under increased fire from elements within the Soviet military⁸ as well as from

independent legislative candidates.⁹ In the Secretary of Defense's 1989 edition of Soviet Military Power, this internal Soviet debate was recognized and was stated that "...military leaders (Soviet) are concerned about recent calls by some Soviet intellectuals and activists... for a volunteer manning system."¹⁰ By eliminating the last vestige of the U.S. draft, we may be able to positively influence this debate. Additionally, it may also provide us with a valuable tool to support and strengthen our bargaining position in the ongoing arms reductions talks being negotiated under the Conventional Armed Forces Europe (CFE) umbrella.

DRAFT REGISTRATION AND THE ARMS CONTROL TALKS

In May 1988, Mr. Georgi Arbatov, the Soviet Director of the Institute of the U.S.A. and Canada said "we are going to do something terrible to you... we are going to deprive you of an enemy." This statement identifies a dilemma faced by the U.S., as we seek to determine our negotiating position in response to the continuing peace initiatives proposed by Soviet General Gorbachev. A review of current literature, as well as my discussions with the staff of the Selective Service Agency, indicates no current intent by the Administration or Agency to change present premobilization draft registration policy. However, the elimination of

registration represents a tangible, multi-faceted, easily implementable, and relatively low cost proposal that would clearly signal U.S. resolve. The elimination of draft registration should be proposed under two different aspects of the ongoing CFE talks.

First, it could be discussed as part of the Conference on Confidence and Security Building and Disarmament in Europe (CDE). This 35 member forum traces its roots back to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in 1973 and is designed to promote openness and transparency. Its products are called Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs).¹¹ While there is cooperation and coordination with those involved in CFE and CSBM negotiations, CSBMs are separate and not necessarily relevant to CFE negotiations.¹² CSBMs are intended to "increase mutual confidence," but stop short of directly constraining military force compositions. Examples of such measures might include political declarations, crisis avoidance arrangements, and other steps designed to increase transparency. These measures are designed to improve the capability of one side to observe the force structure, deployments, and activities of the others military forces and predict how one force will react, in a given situation, to the other military force.¹³ Clearly, elimination of the draft registration would support these CDE objectives and

could be proposed as a CSBM.

The second forum that could be used as a negotiation platform to discuss registration elimination is in the CFE talks themselves. These talks trace their roots to the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) negotiations since 1973. This 23 member forum is concerned with structural aspects of the armed forces of each side, from the Atlantic to the Urals. The objective of the CFE forum is to strengthen stability and security through force parity.¹⁴ Within the CFE, agreements to reinforce and supplement security are called stability measures. Such measures "constrain and/or make transparent any transition from peace to war (mobilization) and how they affect the other side's reaction to such a transition to war."¹⁵ Elimination of the draft registration would clearly support such stability measures and make any mobilization reaction more transparent, thus enhancing the feeling of security of the other force.

While it appears appropriate for draft registration to be discussed under CDE as a CSBM, or under CFE as a stability measure, the differences between the two must be considered. CSBMs are politically binding on the parties; unlike stability measures negotiated under the treaty aspects of CFE, which are legally binding. Additionally, as CSBMs focus on openness and transparency, while stability

measures focus on constraints. ¹⁶

Although there have been past successes in negotiating CSBMs, the U.S. and the Soviet Union appear to approach such negotiations differently. The U.S. tends to concentrate on specific military measures that increase predictability and views these negotiations as independently important matters. The Soviet Union focuses on broader principles and operational constraints of the U.S. military. Additionally, the Soviet Union generally views CSBMs as ancillary issues, over which strategic negotiations (CFE) take priority. ¹⁷

Each forum has its advantages, however, for the above mentioned reasons, I believe draft registration should be used first as a bargaining chip in the higher profile and binding negotiations under CFE, and proposed as a stability measure. If the parties can not reach an accord under CFE, the U.S. would still have the option of proposing the elimination under CDE, as a CSBM. Regardless of which option is used, the elimination of the draft registration represents a win-win opportunity for the U.S. in the arms controls talks, by providing a readily available proposal that is currently serving no political purpose and is of no political (or military) value.

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17. R. B. Byers, F. Stephen Larrabee, and Allen Lynch,
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THE ELIMINATION OF THE DRAFT REGISTRATION:
MILITARY AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

From a historical perspective, U.S. conscription policy has always been controversial. Prior to 1979, and the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, this policy was viewed as an instrument of military power to contribute to our national security needs. This is evidenced by various periods of U.S. conflict, when wartime manpower requirements were filled through a combination of volunteers, to include militias, and the use of a draft. However, the primary reason for discontent involved a public and sometimes political belief of inequality with the implementation of induction practices. With the end of the Vietnam war and the continuation of a relatively large peacetime military force, coupled with the success of the All Volunteer Force, U.S. conscription policy again became a matter of intense debate. Then the draft was eliminated and the Selective Service System was put in a standby status. In 1979 President Carter revitalized the Selective Service System and reoriented U.S. conscription policy as an instrument of political policy.

Draft registration used by President Carter and

later by President Reagan as an element of political power was never successful in its intended goal. As an instrument of political power, registration failed to accomplish its intended "symbolic" purpose.

Registration also serves no useful military purpose, in that it does not contribute to the mobilization effort. Without military value it cannot be considered as an element of military power. The elimination of a premobilization draft registration would have insignificant impact, militarily, and on the U.S. national security strategy.

The impact of elimination represents a win-win opportunity domestically and internationally from both an economic and political perspective. Elimination would save the government money, during a rapidly approaching fiscal crisis; eliminate a long-standing domestic debate; fuel a growing dissatisfaction in the Soviet Union on their own draft policy; and provide a valuable bargaining chip in the ongoing conventional arms reduction talks as a CSBM under the CDE negotiations or a stability measure under the CFE negotiations.

It is ironic, President Bush now has the opportunity to resurrect this failed instrument (currently of no value) and in so doing, become the first president to use the draft registration as a successful instrument of political power.

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20. ABSTRACT--continued.

implications of the author's proposal to eliminate the draft registration. It analyzes the need for a draft registration, alternatives, and actual contributions to mobilization--past, present, and future. Additionally, the study explores how the draft registration was used, unsuccessfully, by two administrations (Democrat and Republican). It concludes with a discussion of how the current administration can resurrect this failed instrument of political power and use it in a "win-win" situation as a bargaining chip in support of the current arms control talks.