
Defense Report

AUSA



Burning the Candle

In a recent series of apparently uncoordinated proposals and actions, The White House, the Congress, and the Department of Defense all appear to be working to undercut the foundations of our national defense.

The Ford Administration is considering the elimination of the Standby Selective Service System. This proposal, if adopted, would effectively end any means of quickly starting the draft in case of an emergency or in the not unlikely event the number of volunteers for military service falls below the numbers needed.

Current Department of Defense and Joint Chiefs of Staff emergency planning is based on delivery of the first draftee 30 days after an emergency begins with 400,000 draftees being inducted within six months. Without a viable standby Selective Service System, the first draftee would not be available for about seven months and the first 100,000 inductees would not be on board until over nine months had passed.

The danger of a long delay in starting the flow of draftees into the military is greatly increased by the rapidly declining strength of the trained inactive manpower pool called the Individual Ready Reserve/Standby Reserve. This pool of former active duty military individuals serving out their final years of military obligation in an inactive reserve status has decreased by over 60 per cent in the last two years and is already insufficient to meet the current minimum mobilization need to fill out the active and reserve component forces. Result: A fully mobilized army will be understrength to begin with and won't get even untrained draftees for many months.

At the same time, the budgeteers in both the Administration and the Congress are considering or have taken actions which will impair the recruiting effort such as the elimination or curtailment of the enlistment bonus for the combat arms, reduction in recruiting advertising, and the elimination of the unit/station of choice enlistment option.

It is important to note that we are not only burning the candle at both ends, but in the middle as well—a practice that results in the early demise of the candle.