

# Nixon's War Policy Indecisive, Withdraw To Appease Public

What characterizes President Nixon's program in Vietnam? The Weekly answers that the indecision shown in Nixon's domestic policy, as concerning tax reform and desegregation, is also present in his policy toward Vietnam. This policy, being projected 1968 by Johnson's Administration, aims for the removal of a sufficient number of fighting troops to appease public opinion in the United States and, therefore, make it acceptable in the eyes of the public to maintain the remaining troops in Vietnam for a long period of time.

What hopes concerning troop removal does this Vietnam policy involve? Nixon hopes to have removed most of the 250,000 fighting troops from Vietnam by the end of 1970 with 35,000 troops being removed by December 15, 1969, which would leave 557,000 men involved in the war. Nixon has been informed that a reduction of 100,000 men would not endanger the American combat strength because there are many men sent to Vietnam to construct airfields and outposts who have completed their duties. But since the June announcement by Nixon of a cutback in draft calls, the draft calls have increased 70%

June	20,000	25,900
July	15,000	22,300
August	18,300	29,500
September	12,200	29,000
October	13,800	29,000
Total	79,300	135,700

What opinions are being voiced from Capitol Hill? Senator Fulbright states that peace will never be realized in Vietnam if the United States insists on having a puppet government in South Vietnam, a feature of both Johnson's and Nixon's plans. Even if this plan succeeds, the United States will be faced with an annual sum of \$12-15 billion needed to maintain the government. Some Senators have spoken against the amount of money the United States is spending to build military equipment, but their criticisms have been generally unsuccessful. The Proxmire amendment asking for a reduction of \$533 million in the purchase of the CSA cargo plane was defeated in Congress. Senator Symington proclaiming that this airplane could enable more troops to be brought home from Vietnam, was followed in his vote against the Proxmire amendment by Senators such as Muskie, Gore, Percy, Javits, and Packwood. Some Senators voting in favor of the amendment were Kennedy, Fulbright, Hart, and Ellender. The Mondale-Case amendment did not succeed in its attempt to halt the \$377 million expenditure for a nuclear aircraft carrier. Considered obsolete today, aircraft carriers have been used in minor battles where there have been no airplanes nor submarines to destroy them, as in North Vietnam or off Guatemala where there is no navy.

How does the military budget of the United States compare to that of the Soviet Union and China? Senator Proxmire has estimated that the Soviet Union's arms budget is one-half our \$80 billion military budget with China's gross national product nearly \$20 billion more than the military budget of the United States. Herman Kahn in Why ABM? states that: "We have in the past . . . spent something like 3 or 4 dollars on offense to every one on defense; the Soviets have probably spent something

like 3 or 4 to one on defense over offense." In addition, the United States has reportedly had 186 underground nuclear test since the nuclear test ban of 1963 . . . to the 28 tests of the Soviet Union.

Are you curious about why United States combat troops were sent to South Vietnam in 1965? The Weekly in April, 1969, indicated that certain passages from General Westmoreland's war report stated that "in 1965 the U. S. put combat troops into South Vietnam not at the request of its government but on our own initiative, and that Saigon in 1965 while acquiescing tried to keep U. S. troops in the sparsely populated Highlands and away from the cities." Having read this war report, on May 12, 1969, Senator Fulbright inquired of the State Department if there was any record of Saigon's formally requesting United States combat troops. The State Department was unable to find any record of this request.

Sources: from I. F. Stone's Weekly Vol. XVII, No. 17 September 22, 1969



War

## Draft Revisions

# Is Lottery Answer To Selective Service?

America's Selective Service System and its compulsory draft program have come under increasing pressure by a variety of interest groups. Critics of the draft and those who urge its reform have been particularly vocal as the war in Vietnam continues to drag on with no apparent hope of settlement by the Administration. Those disillusioned with U.S. participation and conduct in the war constitute the largest faction of draft critics, but they are not alone in their denouncement of the Selective Service System. Politicians trying to win the youth vote, underprivileged ethnic and economic groups seeking an equal opportunity for deferments, military planners championing the strategic advantages of a professional volunteer army, and many others demanding draft reform.

Charges against the present draft system include;

1. local draft boards are unrepresentative
2. appeal procedure for those objecting to induction are inadequate
3. policy of inducting the oldest eligible men first is disruptive to society
4. 7 year period of uncertainty is equally disruptive
5. methods and criteria for selection are not uniform
6. conscript army is militarily undesirable, morally indefensible, and economically impractical.

Responding to the overwhelmingly unfavorable criticism of the compulsory draft system, President Nixon committed himself to Selective Service reform while a candidate. His promise was to end the draft and to reestablish a volunteer army (such as maintained before 1940 with a few exceptions). He admitted that conclusive action would have to wait until after the Vietnam

war was settled, but he urged quick Congressional action on his interim draft reform proposals. The initial response to Nixon's campaign commitment was generally favorable. He still commands much support from the American public, but many of the reform groups disagree with the President's proposals, and alternative plans have been suggested by a growing number of the population.

In answer to the basic question, "Who serves when not all serve?", Nixon has proposed a national lottery in which names would be randomly selected by birthdate and first letter of the last name. A "Selective Service Year", constructed annually of days drawn at random, would create a 600,000 man lottery pool each year. Only about one half that number are needed, and approximately 300,000 men, in the order drawn, would be inducted.

The President asserted that "The present draft arrangements make it extremely difficult for most young people to plan intelligently as they make some of the most important decisions of their lives." He would reduce the present 7 year draft eligible period to a one year "prime age group" period, thus reversing the present policy of inducting the oldest men first. The emphasis would instead be placed on the youngest men, who would face one year of vulnerability with a much better idea of their draft status than under the present system.

Undergraduate students could obtain deferments until they graduated or leave school, and graduate students could be deferred until the end of the academic year. Nixon justified student deferments as "a wise national investment."

The President's proposals are a synthesis of what he feels to be the most desirable aspects of numerous forms of conflicting plans.

In 1967, General Mark Clark, heading a House Armed Services Committee study group, suggested that;

- (1) 19 year olds should be inducted first.
- (2) undergraduate deferments should be continued
- (3) a draft lottery system would be undesirable.

Burke Marshall's Presidential Commission report to President Johnson in 1967 advised that;

- (1) 19 year olds should be inducted first
- (2) undergraduate deferments should be discontinued
- (3) A draft lottery should replace the compulsory draft system.

President Johnson's reform plan, similar to President Nixon's stated that;

- (1) 19 year olds should be inducted first
- (2) undergraduate deferments should be continued
- (3) a draft lottery should replace the compulsory draft system.

Congress' extended draft law called for;

- (1) leaving the order of induction up to the President's discretion
- (2) continuing student deferments
- (3) no draft lottery. These provisions were called a backward step by

Burke Marshall and Senator Edward Kennedy, the most vocal advocate of draft reform in Congress.

The February, 1969 Kennedy draft reform bill featured;

- (1) induction of 19 year olds first

- (2) deferments, but not exemptions for students
- (3) a draft lottery.

And finally, a summary of Nixon's present proposals;

- (1) 19 year olds inducted first
- (2) student deferments
- (3) a national draft lottery.

The chances for Nixon's reform bill to be enacted are favorable, despite opposition by Rep. Mendel Rivers (D. S. C.), head of the powerful House Armed Services Committee. The politically conservative Rivers fears centralization of the Selective Service System and the end of local draft board autonomy. The Senate, on the other hand, seems receptive to the President's proposals.

Draft critics who are not satisfied with Nixon's plan fall into two categories. First, some advocates of a volunteer professional army disagree with Nixon's insistence on the intermediary step of a national draft lottery. They fear the lottery will satisfy enough dissenters to subvert the fundamental goal of voluntary service. They are not willing to wait until the Vietnam war is over to establish a volunteer army, and they will not be satisfied with the lottery. They advocate substantial and immediate improvement of conditions offered to new recruits as a direct move toward a volunteer army. The modifications of this group include;

1. creation of regional selective service boards which more accurately represent the population it deals with
2. nationally uniform standards of induction
3. adequate appeal procedures
4. greater effort to inform men of their draft status
5. fair and impartial random selection of 19 year olds only
6. alternative service other than military duty
7. pre-selection deferments strictly limited to health and occupation criteria, post selection deferments as needed
8. aims of alternative national service should be clear and serious (Peace Corps, Teacher Corps, VISTA programs suggested).

These critics for the most part, denounce a professional volunteer army as not consistent with American ideals of equality and human dignity. They maintain that national security is not synonymous with military strength, and that Selective Service reform should reflect this principle.

Other critics include those who oppose any army or compulsory national service whatsoever, and supporters of the present Selective Service System of compulsory duty. There is no plan that can hope to satisfy all elements in such a broad spectrum of opinion. The President's proposals attempt merely to appeal to moderates of all persuasions in an effort to reach a compromise in the enormously complex problem Selective Service reform.

Sources:

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- Time, May 23, 1969,
- Vital Speeches of the Day April 1, 1969 (Sen. Muskie) Feb. 15, 1969 (W. Allen Wallis)
- Newsweek July 7, 1969 (Melton Friedman)
- American May 31, 1969

