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## Abolish the Draft

The draft is immoral in principle, inequitable in practice, and detrimental to national security. The first thing the new administration should do is start to stop it.

Nothing is more opposed to our ethical, religious, and political principles than taking bodily control of a person and forcing him to submit totally to the will of others. This might be justifiable if it were necessary for the preservation of the nation, or to assure that each person did his duty for the survival or safety of others. No such necessity has existed since 1945.

Inequities in the operation of the draft are widely recognized. It is less widely recognized that inequities are inevitable and are as likely to be aggravated as alleviated by formula selection or lottery selection. No system is equitable if the risk of being drafted is the same for a school dropout as for a heavyweight boxing champion, who never again will be able to win fame or fortune, or a young man in a period of rare artistic or scientific inspiration, or one for whom personal and psychological factors make this the most critical year of his life.

The draft is, moreover, inefficient. Less than a year of useful service is obtained from a draftee's 2-year tour. This is so brief that the relationships necessary for effectiveness seldom grow up and never last. Furthermore, with the 2-year tour, more than twice as many men must be taken each year as would be required with 3-year enlistments.

But the detriment to national security is deeper than mere inefficiency. Much of the violence and passion associated with opposition to the war arises from the threat of being conscripted to fight that war. Not only does this passion disrupt the campuses and overflow from them, but it will weaken the credibility of our negotiators in Paris if they threaten not to accept whatever terms are offered. As was demonstrated in the 1930's, culminating at Munich, a peace-at-any-price approach to preserving peace courts a holocaust.

The alternative to the draft is to set the compensation for service in the armed forces high enough to attract enough volunteers. This would not increase the economic cost of the war; that cost is the value of the goods and services lost to other uses. It would, however, transfer costs which now fall on draftees (in the form of lost civilian earning power) to the taxpayers (who generally have higher incomes) and so would increase the federal budget. While complete abolition of the draft on 30 June would add perhaps \$13 billion to next year's budget, we could go far with \$3 billion wisely deployed.

During most of our history all members of the armed forces have been volunteers, and most of them are now: three-fifths of the Army, nearly all of the Marines, all of the Navy, and all of the Air Force are volunteers (though some are draft-induced volunteers), as are all of the higher-ranking noncommissioned officers and 90 percent of the commissioned officers. (Why is a volunteer officer a "dedicated career man" but a volunteer enlisted man a "mercenary"?) It is not true that, as is sometimes alleged, an all-volunteer force would be predominantly Negro. Most experts expect the proportion to be little if any larger than it is now. What is true is that those in the armed forces, Negro or not, would be paid far better for their services.

The case against the draft cannot be developed fully here. It is, however, about as lopsided a case as one ever meets in questions of public policy. If the present law were not on the books, it is inconceivable that it would be passed now.—W. ALLEN WALLIS, *University of Rochester*\*

\* This editorial is adapted from an address delivered 11 November 1968 before the American Legion, Rochester, New York.