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As the Commission considers potential reforms for the Selective Service System (SSS), it is important to consider the modern purpose of the American system of conscription, the challenges that only conscription can solve, and whether the present management of the Selective Service is poised to meet national requirements that only conscription can solve. Doing so also requires a brief examination of modern debates around the draft that tend toward using it as a band-aid solution toward other civic, social, and national security challenges that have more effective policy and engagement solutions. My testimony will then highlight and challenge some of the assumptions around present and future national security challenges, and whether the United States has adequately prepared for them short of conscription. Finally, I will offer some general recommendations and comments on proposals under consideration by the Commission.

Modern Conscription and the Burden of Competency

As noted in the Commission's staff memo for today's hearing, the original purpose of the Selective Service System was to ensure an adequate armed strength for the armed forces and the reserve components, and to share the obligations and privileges of military service generally, in accordance with a selection system which is fair and just. It's important to consider what has changed American politics, its foreign policy management, its economy and labor market, and its public engagement with national security matters before assuming this is still a reasonable and responsible mission. America's commitment to and substantial investment in an All Volunteer Force (AVF), its large defense budget, its frequent touting of itself as the most effective military ever fielded, and its engagement in a wide range of armed conflict without turning to conscription over the last 4 decades have had understandable impacts on the planning assumptions of defense leaders, politicians, and civilians. Defense leaders have waived away the present or potentially future need for a draft, reliant on the capacities of the AVF against likely adversaries or the assumptions assigned by political leaders on the scope of conflicts the U.S. may plan for. Parts of the military have grown more technical, specialized, and reliant on intensive training and upskilling. So too have vital portions of the American economy, which in critical sectors has grown more globally interconnected and interdependent. In my view, several of these factors have, if not purposely, still effectively raised the bar for application of the draft in anything but a significant, potentially unforeseen national emergency.

Still, in my understanding, the purpose of conscription in this modern American context remains fairly consistent with that laid out in the MSSA: to transfer labor and productivity from the civilian sector of the economy to the state for national security purposes because the national security demand for these contributions is judged higher than what it displaces, and there is no faster, more

effective, or more economical means¹. What is rarely explicitly mentioned is the resulting burden of competency on the state to faithfully prepare for a rational range of security contingencies such that such forceful transfers of labor are highly unlikely or unnecessary. Specifically, to man, train, and equip its armed forces; to keep them in a state of readiness appropriate for the security environment; to generate the intellectual and operational innovations necessary to deter and, if necessary, defeat and adversary; and to maintain within its national security apparatus the expertise necessary to understand and generate sophisticated hedges and responses for future security challenges. This high bar for the use of conscription also assumes that the United States has weighed and pursued options for increasing its capacity and throw weight, to include “enlisting more allies; employing more private military contractors; transforming the military to generate more manpower; and simply enlisting more troops.”² Because conscription leverages the power of the state in the most extreme ways possible-- “[sending] soldiers into harm’s way, where they must engage in acts of violence, often at great personal risk, again on penalty of criminal punishment”³--citizens are justified in expecting the state to competently and responsibly exhaust all its levers before turning to it, and even then only in cases of national security necessity. In short, conscription in the modern American context is not a mechanism to makeup recruitment shortfalls in quiet wars of choice. Rather, it is a management tool that is introduced to upon the public and private consensus judgment that American national security absolutely requires a substantially larger manpower in a time frame that other mechanisms cannot provide with opportunity costs to the economy and civil society can tolerate.

This expectation is not a formal compact, but it is a reasonable one; American support for a draft has steadily and then precipitously eroded as both the existential threat of the Cold War declined and American’s pursuit of foreign policy became more a matter of options than demands⁴. Trying to outline a realistic and widely accepted scenario in which the United States may be called on to institute a draft is fraught for a number of reasons, starting with the reasonable presumption that if strategists can foresee it, the U.S. government should be preparing for it within its present means and intellect. Many resist the notion of a manpower intense ground war in future conflicts due to growing military-technological advances. Projections also convey clearer choices and a stronger sense of judgment and rationality upon our political leaders than is often the case in reality. Still, as I am sure you have heard a dozen times in the past year, the United States fails repeatedly at predicting its next wars and national emergencies. While the present Selective Service System is hardly the robust deterrent it is meant to be, potential adversaries would take notice if the United States declares the prospect of expansive national mobilization unlikely or too hard. That we cannot predict the event that would demand a draft is no reason to discard its purpose altogether.

However, many scholars with more experience than I judge the present SSS system to be potentially unsuitable to such an unpredictable national emergency⁵. The nature of the gap between the present

¹Robert Haddick, “Competitive Mobilization: How Would We Fare Against China?” War on the Rocks, March 2016, <https://warontherocks.com/2016/03/competitive-mobilization-how-would-we-fare-against-china/>.

²Phillip Carter and James Joyner, “Should the Draft Be Brought Back?” Legal Affairs, April 2005, http://www.legalaffairs.org/webexclusive/debateclub_draft0405.msp

³ Phillip Carter, “99 Problems But a Draft Ain’t One,” War on the Rocks, December 2013, <https://warontherocks.com/2013/12/99-problems-but-a-draft-aint-one/>

⁴ Gallup

⁵ I am grateful for the extensive input and ideas of Dr. Lindsay Cohn, Dr. Max Margulies, Phillip Carter, Dr. Jessica Blankshain, and others who have dedicated extensive study to matters related to conscription. Their extensive

all volunteer force, funded at over \$700 billion, and the requirements for any future crisis is completely unknown, and we should have humility in trying to design a system capable of responding to it. Is the gap due to the extreme lethality of the future conflict, or demanding rotational schedules that cannot be adjusted, or requirements for high demand/low density skill sets, or an unforeseen homeland defense mission? Are the variables that protected the U.S. in prior conflicts - its oceans and borders, its industrial strength, its ability to project power - still the same? Will this future scenario demand simply bodies with ample time for training and generating ready units, or will it require individuals with highly unique skills immediately? Can the SSS operate in this scenario without displacing unique or urgent civilian labor inputs, or generating significant political and economic pushback, potentially from overseas partners as well as domestically?

The SSS is in concept tasked with addressing these factors to a degree, but is in practice untested in doing so. The modern expectation of the SSS is not only equitable treatment but also highly flexible competence; some scholars do not believe that it is able to apply the models necessary to address the complex factors noted above⁶. However, it is likewise as questionable whether the government is prepared to set requirements for, absorb, and utilize manpower in the unknown range of scenarios on which a draft could be required. Should substantial ground forces be required urgently, it does not have the capacity to train or equip them expeditiously; should highly select technical experts be necessary to conscript, its regulations hinder their recruitment and effective employment⁷. The larger challenge is arguably on the national security government's side, as conscription is not its only option is acquiring capacity and capability.

These questions and criticisms are not to suggest that the SSS is worthy of elimination, but rather to more pointedly ask what problem reform of the SSS – or dissolution – is trying to solve. That conscription in the American security context would likely be highly challenging is not justification to apply its structure and intent to other political and civic problems. Nor is the resort of conscription an excuse to avoid solving those and other problems. Modifications or augmentations to the SSS may be deemed necessary for rational application in a true national emergency, but the burden of reform and preparation is a task for the existing national security apparatus.

Conscription as a Proxy Solution

In part because the prospect of conventional emergencies demanding conscription appears so far off, there are frequent explorations of whether the SSS might be modified for other purposes. In American political and pundit debate, there is a cyclical rallying cry to reform the draft as a means to address perceived ills in American civic life or even short term gaps in military capacity. Many other scholars have examined these in detail for academic purposes or in response to high level advocacy from prominent pundits or former four stars. While well intentioned, my personal view is that these efforts aim to apply band-aids on other civic, social, and national security challenges that have more effective policy and engagement solutions. Moreover, they are both unlikely to fix the challenges they are ostensibly aimed at and may make them worse. A brief tour of some of the most proposals:

scholarship and generous suggestions were invaluable to my testimony and their expertise should be consulted by the Commission. However, errors of fact or analysis are mine alone.

⁶ Rostker, Bernard, What to Do with the Selective Service System? Historical Lessons and Future Posture. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE197.html>.

⁷ Mobilizing Tech Talent, Partnership for Public Service, September 2018, https://ourpublicservice.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Mobilizing_Tech_Talent-2018.09.26.pdf

Institute the draft to make the military more representative of the American people (absent a national security emergency): At only 1% of the population, the modern military is more aligned with the population it represents than many might guess. However, the fact remains that its members are more rural and conservative than the broader population; they are likely more likely to have family members with service experience than not; the overall armed forces is predominantly male; and the officer corps is disproportionately white. Most of these trend lines are likely to continue, generating a force that is in many ways disconnected from the American people and vice versa, representationally as well as physically. While a military that looks like America might appear to be an idealized goal, conscription is likely not the mechanism to achieve it. First, any effort to conscript certain segments of the populations over others for purposes of evening out the representation of the current force not likely to stand legally and violate some understandings of the necessity of fairness in applying the draft. Second, with present budget constraints and enlistment capacity, such a conscript force would likely be quite small, doing either remedy representational limits or better connect the military with the people it represents. Third, DoD is aware of the many policy choices it makes that shape the force it has presently and removes it physically and socially from the American people. It has mechanisms to address these disconnects that do not rely on conscription. As my former colleague Phil Carter stated, “it’s worth remembering that civil-military relations hit a low point at the height of the Vietnam War.”

Institute the draft to lessen support for current wars/increase American’s “skin in the game”: This viewpoint is anecdotally found in a number of populations, ranging from current service members understandably frustrated with their fellow citizen’s disengagement from present conflicts to anti-war activists seeking a point of political leverage. While there is certainly some evidence to support the concept that “the draft decreases popular support for war...[it is not immediately obvious](#) that leaders [would be responsive to the public’s preferences.](#)”⁸ Moreover, the conflict in Afghanistan and related efforts for under the AUMF are themselves already increasingly unpopular, yet still ongoing. Some of the most sustained political debate and related electoral impact *against* Iraq War in 2006⁹ took place before a significant change in strategy—the surge. While I am sympathetic to the desire for all American’s to understand the costs of wars fought in their name – or even that they exist at all – I find any sentiment of military resentment against civilians’ protected position disturbing, and one that seeks to put the “nation in the service of its military,” at high cost, with questionable impact. Finally, there are policy and public remedies to this distancing that do not demand conscription.

Institute the draft to lessen rotational demands emerging from present conflicts (absent an additional national security emergency): Deployments in the hundreds of thousands of troops to Iraq and Afghanistan appear to be a matter of the past (for now), and the extreme readiness crises highlighted by Service Chiefs over the last decade appear to be diminishing due to improved resources and lesser operational demands. As the Army adjusts from preparing for counterterrorism and stabilization deployments to readiness for higher-end conflict, some force management challenges remain, compounded by its problems meeting recruitment goals against force growth targets¹⁰. However, advocates of the draft to limit

⁸ Max Margulies, “The Greatest Sacrifice: Why Military Service Should Not Be an Obligation of Citizenship,” *War on the Rocks*, May 2018, <https://warontherocks.com/2018/05/the-greatest-sacrifice-why-military-service-should-not-be-an-obligation-of-citizenship/>

⁹ “Poll: Opposition to Iraq War at All Time High,” CNN, September 25, 2006, <http://www.cnn.com/2006/POLITICS/08/21/iraq.poll/>

¹⁰ Lolita C. Baldor, “Army Misses 2018 Recruiting Goal,” AP, September 21, 2018, <https://www.apnews.com/4e920aef0ee41caa152a12df6d89600>

the need for stop-loss, deployment extensions, and high tempo rotational patterns that damage morale, readiness, and good-faith treatment of the all volunteer force are usually doing so retrospectively. But they still merit a response. To have turned to the draft in those instances would be an exercise of coercive state power due to (1) a war of questionable justification (2) a strategy that was under-resourced from the beginning, possibly extending the conflict unnecessarily; (3) continually overly-expansive and unrealistic policy goals (4) poor force management practices known within the DoD that seriously constrained its deployable force and its access to the reserve component. While I understand the motivation, predictable policy, strategy, and management failure as a justification for conscription should be a tough sell, if not altogether impossible. Leaders should be forced to be extremely careful in their deployment of the blood and treasure of the nation; to offer them access to the “low cost insurance” of the draft in wars of choice does not incentivize judicious policymaking. Moreover, because the Department of Defense and White House rejected the draft in instance of the mid/late 2006s¹¹, it will be difficult for them to publicly justify it in future similar scenarios.

Modify and institute the draft for broader national service requirements, OR, Modify and institute the draft to fill key highly technical expertise gaps in the national security apparatus: Well-aligned with the mission of this panel is a growing range of voices supporting the notion of mandatory national service, with the potential to modify the SSS to enable a version of selective national service as the nations’ needs demand. As a public servant I support the motivation. However, I invite advocates and the commission to recognize that the United States both has a significant population that already seeks public service and¹² (2) at the federal and military level, it has made a number of policy choices that make it difficult for much of that population to serve¹³. In other words: there is an appetite for service that is being unmet, and selective or universal service requirements will not fix that. Speaking for my own career field, hiring managers in the national security civilian workforce cannot get timely access to the specific expertise they need for the period they need it, even when resources are available for such requirements and the requirement is urgent and consequential. More broadly, they cannot shape the workforce they require for today’s and tomorrow’s challenges. On the other side of this dynamic, talented national security experts are significantly deterred from federal service, and not because public sector hiring is so selective - because it has needless barriers. The reasons for this are numerous and well-documented; organizations like the Partnership for Public Service and government study groups such as the Defense Innovation Board¹⁴ have routinely detailed the flawed logic of relying on a decades-old civil service system that in no way reflects the “changes in the nature of work or the expanded responsibilities of our government.

¹¹ Rostker, Bernard, What to Do with the Selective Service System? Historical Lessons and Future Posture. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE197.html>.

¹² College Students are Attracted to Federal Service, but Agencies need to capitalize on their interest,” Partnership for Public Service, March 2014, https://www.govexec.com/media/gbc/docs/pdfs_edit/031713e2.pdf

¹³ Renewing America’s Civil Service, Partnership for Public Service and the Volcker Alliance, <https://www.volckeralliance.org/sites/default/files/attachments/Renewing%20America%27s%20Civil%20Service%20policy%20paper%20-%20FINAL.pdf>; Testimony of Laura Junor to the Senate Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee, March 23, 2017, https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Junor_03-23-17.pdf.

¹⁴ Defense Innovation Board, “Software is Never Done: Refactoring the Acquisition Code for Competitive Advantage: Supporting Information” Department of Defense, March 21, 2019, https://media.defense.gov/2019/Mar/26/2002105908/-1/-1/0/SWAP.REPORT_SUPPLEMENTARY.DOCS.3.21.19.PDF.

Completing Prerequisites

What I find troubling about many debates about military and national conscription is they skip over a rational prologue: what are the likely and unlikely challenges to America's national security interests, and are they understood by the public that may be pulled into address them? Is America doing what is necessary to manage those challenges without resorting to the coercive power of the state on its own people? Should a national emergency demanding the displacement of civilian labor occur, will the American people trust the government to make that decision? Would the American people, or key sectors of the economy, be aligned with their government on the nature of the threat?

The progress that has been made on these prerequisites is mixed. While among the national security elite there is some modicum of agreement on entrance into a new era of great power competition, it is by no means universal, and does not have extensive public support or engagement. The issuance of the National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy, which made headway in defining key challenges and means for addressing them, was followed by the departure the senior leaders behind their authorship, and a track record of implementation that has been both mixed and lacking emphasis on public or Congressional engagement. As highlighted by the National Defense Strategy Commission, DoD chose to classify key portions of the strategy, including the core operational challenges it faces. This limits the ability of Congress and defense experts to evaluate progress on the strategy and support its implementation, but just as importantly it also masks from the public the key questions for which the United States is wrestling for solutions—solutions that may well demand their passive participation or tacit support well before conscription might even be faintly considered.¹⁵

It is odd to debate the prospect of conscription for a notional conflict resulting from a great power competition in which the nation, its allies, and even elements of the national security bureaucracy itself are not yet strategically invested or aligned. Nor has the federal government done all it can – or even fully recognized the requirement – to diversify its strategy beyond the purely military to the economic, political, and technological fronts that would likely dominate great power competition. In terms of talent, the federal government has not created the personnel systems necessary to recruit and retain the deeply expert, highly-technical, frequently re-trained, flexible workforce the national security world demands, tying one if not both arms behind its back in this competition. Militarily, key experts believe that radical changes—and improved public engagement and oversight-- in military strategy and operational thinking are necessary for the United States to be able to prevail in competition potential conflict with a plausible great power adversary.¹⁶

Within the U.S. economy, there is serious misalignment between the government and our technology sector on technology and innovation cooperation and competition with potential adversaries, with growing interdependencies in key capability areas. Moreover, the United States is in a position of relative disadvantage in some foundational technologies such as 5G, and remains behind in terms of public strategies and incentives and public-private partnerships that might reverse this failing.

¹⁵ Eric Edelman and Gary Roughead et al, "Providing for the Common Defense: Assessment and Recommendations of the National Defense Strategy Commission," United States Institute of Peace, November 2018, <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2018-11/providing-for-the-common-defense.pdf>

¹⁶ Chris Dougherty, "Implementing the National Defense Strategy Demands Operational Concepts," Center for a New American Security, April 11, 2019, <https://www.cnas.org/publications/commentary/implementing-the-national-defense-strategy-demands-operational-concepts-for-defeating-chinese-and-russian-aggression>

In short, I remain concerned that a national emergency demanding conscription may not be the result of strategic surprise but national inertia, ignorance, and event incompetence. And in such a scenario, it's reasonable to consider whether that public and business outcry and protest against personnel conscription or economic mobilization may be stronger and more resistant than in prior American experience (even if not, there should be an expectation that the government has done all it can in good faith to hedge against such an outcome). Will, for instance, a generation of young men and women with limited connection to the military have any openness to military service? Civil-military scholars Jim Golby and Hugh Liebert note that "Citizens turning 16 today have not seriously entertained the possibility of being drafted into military service. Their parents had no first-hand experience of the draft; only their grandparents' generation lived with the real possibility of being called to serve involuntarily during wartime."¹⁷ In a conscription seeking specific technical talent, would the private sector—increasingly globalized, interconnected, and interdependent—be willing to give up its high demand workforce, or view the threat similarly to the U.S. government? Are selection boards prepared to make the judgment of whether highly expert individuals are better placed in military service or in the economy, and will the public view their judgments as fair? Given the increasingly secretive nature of national security deliberations and military deployments, are there scenarios in which the government may be unwilling to fully acknowledge or describe a conflict for which it seeks conscription?

At over a trillion dollars a year for national security, Americans might reasonably ask why it is necessary to reform or replace a conscription system for a government that has not first done its homework – or even engaged the American people on what threats and scenarios keep the government up at night. With the threat or opportunity of conscripted service Americans might reasonably expect to be told where, why, and in what number Americans are already at war, and what sort of commitment has been made for their mission. Before an AI expert is conscripted, Americans might ask whether their future work station is still using a ten-year-old web browser, whether their limited recreational drug usage is a problem, or if the federal personnel system is even capable of hiring, retaining, and developing AI experts. Before the draft is instituted to better connect the American people to their military, Americans might ask that DoD reinstitute press briefings.

While I commend Congress for standing up the Commission to engage on matters of public, national, and military service, I find there to be significant deficiencies in the "homework" necessary to set the United States up for success in deploying the range "servants" the Commission is studying. While improvements can be made to the Selective Service System or whatever model follows, doing so without made other reforms to the existing national security debate and public dialogue would be a missed opportunity.

Recommendations for the Commission

- (1) ***Focus on purpose of SSS:*** Any proposals put forward by the Commission that reform or replace the SSS should focus solely on those missions that conscription, and only

¹⁷ Liebert, H., & Golby, J. (2017). Midlife Crisis? The All-Volunteer Force at 40. *Armed Forces & Society*, 43(1), 115–138. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X16641430>

conscription, can fill, at a time of national emergency. To reiterate, these should emphasize the system's ability to transfer labor and productivity from the civilian sector of the economy to the state for national security purposes because the national security demand for these contributions is judged higher than what it displaces, and there is no faster, more effective, or more economical means. There are other policy and engagement remedies available to a range of stakeholders to address civil-military tensions, demands for national service, constraining expansive or flawed foreign policy goals, or short-term strains on force employment.

(2) Emphasize the prerequisite of reform of public service: Before the nation seriously considers how to conscript selective skillsets or making public service of some kind mandatory, it should remove the significant barriers to public service, particularly in the national security field. It's vital that the Commission place the matter of national security human capital on the priority agenda of Congress. The national security workforce is a critical component to developing, honing, and executing a strong national security strategy, and it has been sorely neglected by political leaders. Relevant national security committees should pursue fixes in three general buckets of activity: instituting system-wide tactical repairs that have been extensively studied by such bodies as the Partnership for Public Service; conducting productive oversight; and laying the groundwork for extensive reforms. What follows is an excerpt of a draft brief to Congress I am publishing separately, with recommendations aimed at national security committees¹⁸:

- Tactical Repairs to National Security Human Capital:*
- Professionalize professional development: Allocate specific funds for professional development of the current national security workforce (general, technical, and managerial).
 - Elevate talent management: Allocate funds for regular retraining of human resource specialists to access full range of authorities and opportunities for hiring a workforce. Create pilot programs for specialized recruitment and talent management teams akin to those used by the United States Digital Service¹⁹.
 - Enhance talent mobility: Permit prior government employees to be re-hired non-competitively at any level for which they are qualified. Remove barriers to talent movement between departments and agencies and for on-ramps for internship and fellowship programs.
 - Share lessons and make them permanent: Using lessons learned from specialized technical hiring pilot programs across government. Expand and make permanent career-specific hiring authorities and salary caps for technical fields. End the band-aid/special case mentality of special hiring authorities.
 - Create paid federal family leave program.

¹⁸ Prepublication: Loren DeJonge Schulman, "Key Issues for Congress: National Security Human Capital," Center for a New American Security, TBD.

¹⁹ Mobilizing Tech Talent, Partnership for Public Service, September 2018, https://ourpublicservice.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Mobilizing_Tech_Talent-2018.09.26.pdf

Productive Oversight of National Security Human Capital:

- Generate leadership expectations: Raise national security human capital questions in confirmation and oversight hearings with senior administration officials, making clear that Congress expects federal personnel to be a priority matter in the nominee's tenure.
- Drive the conversations: Regularly engage (in briefings and public hearings) agency leaders on how they are utilizing authorities aimed at shaping and strengthening the civilian workforce. Demand progress reports on how these opportunities and authorities are being maximized. Engage directly with recent federal hires and departed employees for personal experiences.
- Investigate retaliation and workforce protections: Based on allegations of political retaliation, pursue long-term investigations of relevant reporting and the strength of whistleblower protections in the national security workforce, particularly when they may reference sensitive material.

Groundwork for Reform of National Security Human Capital

- Generate options for continuum of service: Begin a series of policy-focused engagements and hearings setting an expectation for the national security field to be able to hire the talent they need, in the time they need it, for the period they need it, and at a reasonable market cost. Likewise, set expectations for those in the national security workforce to be able to pursue flexible and rewarding careers that enhance their skills, broaden their exposure, and make them competitive for roles in and out of government. Consider a model where national security experts can transition in and out of federal service multiple times throughout their career, in a wide range of time periods, with minimal barriers to entry, or where federal offices with volatile technical requirements are able to generate, consult, and motivate further development of a community of interest within and outside government.
- Pursue simpler personnel system with widespread flexibility in the national security space: Begin a series of studies and hearings that values long term reform, instead of packaging band-aids for each high-demand skillset.

(3) Encourage Congress to engage on civil-military issues: As I wrote last year in the *Texas National Security Review*, Congress' "ability to stage and amplify policy debate for the American people is without parallel, and it has tremendous latent potential to restore greater balance in civil-military relations... [It has been] disaffected, often ignorant of where the U.S. military is even engaged, and has made little headway into questioning or shaping this intervention." In that piece I outline a range of steps Congress should take to reverse its habitual or fearful distancing from intensive oversight of military matters, to include:

- *[Excerpt] Increasing transparency to the public on the manner, costs, risks, intent, and success or failure of military interventions.* As I wrote with Alice Friend, the current approach of military secrecy and unwillingness to pursue an "airing of grievances" about past strategic and operational failure "assumes that domestic support for U.S. military engagements can be sustained in an information vacuum. It draws on a reservoir of public faith in the military while also limiting the public's ability to make an informed decision. This is a losing gamble."²⁰

²⁰ Loren DeJonge Schulman and Alice Friend, "The Pentagon's Transparency Problem," *Foreign Affairs*, May 2, 2018, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2018-05-02/pentagons-transparency-problem>.

- *Ensuring that any military action America does engage in has clear goals, is limited in scope, is sustainable for the duration, and is assessed in terms of fully-burdened costs to the military, the broader national security community (intelligence analysts, diplomats, aid workers, contractors, and more), U.S. allies, and local populations.*
- *Sustaining engaged and thoughtful interest, oversight, and civil skepticism of all military and non-military intervention activities abroad.* The beginning of an intervention should not be the high point of political energy. It is shameful that the progress of the war in Afghanistan, the viability of the U.S. counterterrorism strategy, the occasional airstrikes in Syria, and much more escape serious oversight.
- *Advancing civil-military relations with respectful skepticism of military employment; unconditional support for service members, families, and veterans; and resolve to right wrongs of past failures.*²¹[End Excerpt]

(4) Generate Public Dialogue and Oversight on National Security Challenges: As noted above, while there is (some) general agreement among national security elites on the nature of the largest foreign policy challenges of the future, debates on these matters are generally classified or behind closed doors, and the broader public has not been usefully exposed to the sorts of challenges the United States may face in the coming decades. Moreover, as detailed above, there is misalignment between the government and many key elements of the private sector on these matters. If this Commission, Congress, or any outside expert is seriously concerned about a high-risk challenge that could demand the United States re-start conscription, there is a great deal of catch up work to do to persuade the American people of that necessity—or even to involve it in the prevention. Congress can play a key role in defining and examining these critical national security challenges, fostering changes within government national security investment and intellectual innovation; and holding the government accountable for failures of inertia in implementing its strategy²². It can also generate incentives for public-private dialogue and potential partnership on the economic and technology competitions that will likely underpin any future national security competitions. Finally, Congress can discourage the anti-democratic tendencies of over-classifying or hiding key military operations, activities, and data to ensure Americans are aware of what risks are being undertaken in their name.

(5) Exercise, exercise, exercise: While I am skeptical of overdesigning a future SSS or replacement system for the purposes of being ready for any of a wide-range of national security emergencies, I think there is significant merit in testing these systems. Low-stakes and informal exercises that test assumptions and plans of the SSS itself and its integration with DoD and other elements of government are necessary not only to judge effectiveness, but to bring the evidence of this system and its potential requirements into the public consciousness. Consistent with their disconnect from the exercise of national security, Americans presently judge the likelihood of a draft to be low. Any scenario demanding its

²¹ Loren DeJonge Schulman, “Progressives Should Embrace the Politics of Defense,” Texas National Security Review, December 4, 2018, <https://tnsr.org/roundtable/policy-roundtable-the-future-of-progressive-foreign-policy/>

²² Chris Dougherty, “Implementing the National Defense Strategy Demands Operational Concepts,” Center for a New American Security, April 11, 2019, <https://www.cnas.org/publications/commentary/implementing-the-national-defense-strategy-demands-operational-concepts-for-defeating-chinese-and-russian-aggression>

activation will be a shock. This Commission has made useful inroads in the public debate of surfacing these potential requirements, but more is necessary.