

## **The All-Volunteer Force Forum**

### **National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service Selective Service Hearings | April 30, 2019**

**Submitted by MG Dennis Laich, Executive Director**

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I am responding to your 29 April invitation to share any additional thoughts I have after last week's hearings. I will not reiterate my concerns re the shortcomings of the AVF. I do feel strongly that women should register for Selective Service and that the SS should remain in place and some of its shortcomings should be identified and addressed. SS is critical to national defense because of its contribution to mass mobilization, the message of resolve to our potential enemies, and its contribution to reminding the American people of their responsibilities. If women are not required to register, I am confident men will sue to not be required to register and the SS will collapse due to court decisions. If women can contribute to military success as "volunteers" there is no reason to believe they cannot do so as conscripts. I was impressed by the testimony re higher injury rates for women and believe that this should be addressed by DoD (however this does not change my macro views).

I reviewed the Staff Memorandums and found them to be generally comprehensive and balanced. However, I would not readily subscribe to three of the assumptions that underlie the policy options. One, "AVF personnel costs will remain fiscally sustainable and national leaders will sufficiently resource the AVF to address most threats to US vital interests". This assumption ignores the fact that the US is already \$22 trillion in debt with deficits projected over the next ten years that will drive the debt above \$30 trillion. Interest on the debt in ten years will approach a trillion dollars annually thus changing the traditional guns vs. butter construct to a guns vs. butter vs. interest construct. In this same 10-year time frame Social Security and Medicare will face insolvency. Second, "The draft should be reserved for national security emergencies". The Army may be approaching an emergency already and the pool of those meeting minimum enlistment requirements and propensity to serve is declining. I should also remind you of the "AVF arithmetic" I outlined to the commission which would have the military be able to access about 1 million people who are able but unwilling to serve many of whom are mentally and physically superior to those being enlisted today.....think National Merit Scholars and class valedictorians who would make great cyber-warriors or intel analysts or All-Conference linebackers who would make great infantrymen. Third, "Current conditions do not appear to warrant a return to standing conscription". The fact that the Army granted 10-12% of its enlistees waivers last year and enlisted 1.9% of its enlistees as CAT IV;s calls this assumption into question.

One other observation is that I thought Bernie Rostker's testimony was outdated and self-serving and his data skewed.

I would also be interested to know if the Commission has identified panelists for the May hearings and, if so, who they are.

Thank you for inviting me to "weigh in" and I look forward to seeing you in May.

Respectfully yours,  
MG Dennis Laich  
Executive Director  
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