



End Draft Registration – Now!

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The two worst trends in American life – militarism and political correctness – have finally come together in a call by our top military chieftains for women to be forced to register for the draft:

“The top officers in the Army and Marine Corps testified on Tuesday that they believe it is time for women to register for future military drafts, following the Pentagon’s recent decision to open all jobs in combat units to female service members.

“Gen. Mark A. Milley, chief of staff of the Army, and Gen. Robert B. Neller, the Marine Corps commandant, both said they were in favor of the change during an occasionally contentious Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on the full integration of women in the military. The generals, both infantry officers, offered their opinions in response to a question from Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.), who said that she also is in favor of the change.”

It’s only natural that Sen. McCaskill, a big wheel on the Senate Armed Services Committee – who opposed the Obama administration’s phased withdrawal from Afghanistan – and one of the Senate’s posturing “feminists,” would take this position. Another natural is Max Boot, writing in *Commentary*, who says – surprise! – that we should take Israel as our model, and who has such a long list of wars he’d like to start that he needs every able-bodied American he can lay his hands on. Boot is an advisor to neocon fave-rave Marco Rubio, who also wants America’s daughters enslaved in the service of the war god. Jeb Bush agrees, as does Chris Christie, who recently gave up on his increasingly hopeless bid to do to the country what he did to New Jersey.

Only Ted Cruz objects. He calls it “nuts,” averring:

“I’m the father of two little girls. I love those girls with all my heart. They are capable of doing anything in their hearts’ desire, but the idea that their government would forcibly put them in the foxhole with a 220-pound psychopath trying to kill them, doesn’t make any sense at all.”

Well, good for him, but his stated objections don’t really get to the heart of the issue. Opponents of registering women for the draft, including the libertarian Cato Institute’s Christopher Preble, all point to the practical difficulties as well as the fact that it is “unnecessary.” But what if it became “necessary” according to the calculations of our Washington warlords? Well, then, says Preble, “In the event that a mass-conscripted army was ever again required to defend our country from attack, Congress could immediately pass a law to make that happen.”

Aside from the assumption that a draft would only be utilized in order to “defend the country,” i.e. the territory of the United States – a premise that history refutes – this argument concedes that the government has every right to conscript citizens. And this is where Preble’s utilitarian arguments are not only inadequate, but dangerous.

The history of anti-draft agitation during the Vietnam war points to why this debate is occurring. The move within GOP circles to go to a volunteer army was spearheaded by Milton Friedman, the noted utilitarian economist, whose arguments against conscription were that it was inefficient and did not advance the ends it was supposed to serve. A “mercenary” army, Friedman and his fellow utilitarians argued, was a good thing because we’re all mercenaries in that we are paid for our work. Yet this point did not meet the question head on precisely because utilitarians, as Murray Rothbard pointed out around this time, “have no theory of the State”:

“They think of the state, and this is true of Milton and the whole gang as far as I can see, as another social instrument. In other words, there is the market out here and then there is the state, which is another friendly neighborhood organization. You decide on which thing, which activity, should be private and which should be state on the basis of an ad hoc, utilitarian kind of approach. ‘Well, let’s see, we’ll feed the thing through the computer. We find that the market usually wins out, that the market is usually better.’ ... So, they feed the thing in – we’ll have controls for a while and then they will die out – it’s not very important anyway.

“You see, they really think they can put through Friedmanism, let’s say, just by educating Nixon. ... That is really the sort of theory of social change the Friedmanites have. You see the President once in a while, you talk to him and you convince him that there shouldn’t be price controls, the ICC should be eliminated, or whatever – and then he goes ahead and does it.

“But it just doesn’t work that way. They have no realization that the state is essentially a gang of thieves and looters. That they are exploiting the public, that they have a whole bureaucratic apparatus of exploitation, and that they are not just going to give it up. In other words, there is the whole problem of power involved which the Friedmanites refuse to face. They don’t realize that the state is not a social instrument. It’s an inimical organization which is hostile to society, plundering it, which has to be confined, whittled away, reduced and hopefully ultimately

abolished. They have no conception of that at all. They just think of it as another friendly, corner grocer kind of thing which you either use or don't use."

So they "educated" Nixon and Donald Rumsfeld – who was anti-draft, by the way – and they wrote up all these "empirical" studies showing how a cost-benefit analysis demonstrated beyond any doubt that conscription wasn't needed, there were hidden costs, and it was no good. They got rid of the draft.

Except they really didn't, because draft registration remained as a requirement for every able-bodied male. The principle that the government owns us, and that they can assert that ownership at any time – in a "national emergency," or for "defense" – was never challenged, and so the draft was never really abolished but merely *held in abeyance*. If, at some future time, our wise rulers decided that our services were required, well then they knew where we lived and they could come and get us at their convenience. Such are the wages of utilitarianism – a "pragmatic" methodology that is eminently *impractical*, at least as far as libertarians are concerned.

Furthermore, what Friedman and his disciples never took into consideration were the cultural factors now driving the movement to force women to register. Looking at the issue through the narrow lens of economic "efficiency," they never imagined that the crazed egalitarianism that was making headway even at that time would ever result in a demand that, in the name of "gender equality," all should be considered property of the State, and not just men.

Yet that's where we are at today. In the name of "equal opportunity," women are now encouraged to not only join the military and help Uncle Sam subjugate various "rogue" nations, but they are also being hectored into playing combat roles. This is where the three dominant trends in our society – egalitarianism, militarism, and statism – have taken us: we all must be allowed the opportunity of slaughtering those Middle Eastern recalcitrants who refuse to bend a knee to Uncle Sam.

The draft is *morally wrong*: the State doesn't own us – we own ourselves. Conscription is un-American, unconstitutional, and inimical to the principles of a free society. Under no circumstances is it ever justified, period. If a nation cannot find enough volunteers to defend itself against foreign invasion, then this tells us something about the nature of the regime – that it has lost whatever legitimacy it once had, and therefore doesn't deserve to exist.

Any fight against the draft, or a system of proto-conscription, that doesn't make the moral argument *primary* is doomed to fail – as the present debate over draft registration proves. If conscription really is *slavery*, as even Professor Friedman described it, then what are we to make of "empirical" studies urging its abolition on the grounds of its economic inefficiency? Imagine someone making such arguments today against the institution of slavery anywhere in the world, or in relation to the enslavement of African-Americans in the American South before the Civil War.

That we have a system of draft registration underscores how far we are from the principles of individual liberty upon which this country was founded: indeed, the Founders were themselves against even the concept of a standing army, let alone a conscripted one. And that a coalition of addle-brained “feminists,” neoconservative warmongers, and Pentagon brass are now agitating to expand it is a direct threat to our liberties that I don’t see anyone, anywhere, effectively opposing.

*Where are the libertarian youth organizations, such as Young Americans for Liberty and Students for Liberty, on this issue, which affects them directly? It is illegal not to register for the draft, and furthermore any college loan cannot be made to unregistered students. Not only that, but it isn’t only US citizens who are required to register: green-card holders and *even refugees* must also turn in their names, locations, and other information to Uncle Sam just in case the Washington politicians decide it’s time to use them as cannon fodder.*

Here is an issue that hits all the right buttons: individual rights, political correctness, militarism, and Big Government. So *let’s get moving*, you lazy-ass libertarians: it’s time to build a coalition with other groups who oppose the enslavement of human beings –constitutional conservatives, old-fashioned liberals, and just ordinary people – so we can put an end to draft registration (and the specter of a future draft) once and for all.

Two of the Pentagon’s most zealous water-boys, Reps. Duncan D. Hunter (R-California) and Ryan Zinke (R-Montana), both members of the House Armed Services Committee, have introduced legislation that would require all women between the ages of 18 and 26 to register.

Hunter is the Pork King of Southern California: he brazenly scarfs up tax dollars for the big defense companies that finance his campaigns. He has received hundreds of thousands from practically every big military contractor in the country: General Atomics, Raytheon, Honeywell, Boeing, Northrup Grumman, and Lockheed Martin. From his perch on the House Armed Services Committee he ensures that a steady stream of cash flows to his cronies in the “defense” industry.

In an interview with C-SPAN, Hunter declared:

“I think it’s inevitable. If you hit Iran, you do it with tactical nuclear devices and set them back a decade or two or three. That’s what you do with a massive aerial bombardment campaign.”

His father, Duncan L. Hunter – whom he succeeded in Congress – is the author of a book entitled *Victory in Iraq: How America Won*. Yes, that’s really the title. Mindless militarism apparently runs in the family.

Another bill dealing with the same subject has been introduced in Congress by a bipartisan group of House members that would abolish draft registration. Reps. Mike Coffman (R-Colorado), Dana Rohrabacher (R-California), Peter DeFazio (D-Oregon), and Jared Polis (D-Colorado) are

co-sponsoring the bill. This legislation would rid us of a system that, aside from being immoral, costs \$23 million every year.

It's high time we got rid of this cold war anachronism, which is a brazen insult to the distinctly American idea citizens aren't servitors of the State. The Selective Service system must go!