

End the Draft Permanently

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Recently the U.S. Supreme Court declined to consider a challenge to the all-male draft. The plaintiffs in the case argued that excluding women from the draft was unconstitutional. Apparently the Court is simply letting Congress decide the issue.

I’ve got an idea — an idea grounded in freedom. How about abolishing the draft — and, of course, draft registration? In fact, better yet, how about enacting a constitutional amendment prohibiting the draft from ever being enacted again?

Young people might think the matter is irrelevant, given that there hasn’t been conscription since the Vietnam War. That is naive, wishful, and dangerous thinking. Every 18-year-old male is required, on pain of a felony conviction, to register for the draft. The reason? Because in the event of some major foreign war, make no mistake about it: The Pentagon will not hesitate to restore the draft because it will need soldiers to fight, kill, and die. Young men — and also most likely young women — will begin receiving draft notices ordering them to report to military facilities for training and “service” to “their country.”

The fact that the national-security establishment continues doing everything it can to gin up such a war — like with Russia, China, Iran, or North Korea — makes the the possibility of a draft even more likely. And once it happens, there is little anyone will be able to do to stop it. In fact, in the event of another major foreign war, I wouldn’t be surprised if they started jailing people for just challenging the draft, as U.S. officials did in World War I.

There is no way to reconcile conscription with the principles of a genuinely free society. Either people are the masters of their own lives or the government is their master. It’s one or the other.

With conscription, the government wields the power to order a person to leave his family and his regular life and report to a government facility to serve the state. That is the opposite of freedom. In a genuinely free society, a person has the right to live his life the way he wants — free of governmental interference, so long as his conduct is peaceful and non-fraudulent.

In fact, there is actually no difference between slavery and conscription. Under slavery, a person is being force to serve his master. That's what conscription is based on. It's a system in which the individual is being forced to serve his master, with the master being the federal government, and specifically the Pentagon.

Under 19th-century slavery in America, the slave's service usually consisted of work on a plantation. Under conscription, the work consists of military training on a Pentagon-run facility and then killing, maiming, or torturing people on orders in some faraway land. But that's just a distinction without a difference. What matters is that under both systems, the individual is being forced to serve his master.

Proponents of the draft say that sometimes it is necessary to force people to fight for "freedom." But that's ridiculous because if you have a system where the government can conscript people, you no longer have a free society. Freedom has been destroyed in the name of protecting freedom.

Moreover, when you have a genuinely free society, you don't need to force people to fight for their freedom. A free people will fight vociferously to protect their freedom. In fact, foreign regimes that attack and invade a genuinely free society soon find that they have swallowed a porcupine.

The problem is that the U.S. government wages foreign wars — that is, wars in faraway lands, where no foreign regime has attacked or invaded the United States. In those wars, many Americans aren't interested in giving up their lives to fight the "enemy." World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam come to mind.

In every one of those wars, Americans had to be forced to go fight, kill, and die. Oh, yes, they were all told that they were fighting for their "freedom," but that was palpable nonsense.

If any of the enemies in those wars were really invading the United States, there would have been more than enough Americans ready and willing to defend their country, their lives, and their freedom. No one would have had to have been forced to fight.

Yes, I know, in World War II Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. But my hunch is that many Americans realized that President Roosevelt had manipulated Japan into attacking in order to circumvent widespread American opposition to entry into the war. Moreover, many Americans realized that Japan never intended to invade and take over the United States, Instead, it was simply trying to knock out the Pacific fleet to give Japan a free hand to secure oil in the Dutch East Indies, as a way to overcome FDR's pre-war oil embargo on Japan. Moreover, if FDR had not been successful in maneuvering Japan into "firing the first shot," Germany would not have declared war on the United States.

If you've never read the essay "[Conscription](#)" by Daniel Webster, I highly recommend it:

Today, the American people have a unique opportunity to lead the world to a genuinely free society. A great place to begin would be a constitutional amendment, modeled after the 13th Amendment, that prohibits conscription forever.

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