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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, D.C., SEPT. 21, 1971 -- U.S. Senator Bob Dole today urged Senate passage of the Military Selective Service Act.

Dole said in a statement on the Senate floor, "It would be unfortunate if the intemperance of feeling peculiar to debate on Indochina were allowed to infect the very process of orderly legislation. The legislative process has run its course on this bill; the collective judgement has been rendered. To obstruct this bill further does no service to the American people....

Dole added that delay would, "seriously impair the quality of our armed forces." And that, "A deplorable consequence of the lapse of the draft will be the impact upon our allies and friends, especially in Europe."

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A COMPLETE COPY OF THE SENATOR'S REMARKS IS ATTACHED:

FROM: THE OFFICE OF U.S. SENATOR BOB DOLE
SENATE FLOOR STATEMENT
SEPTEMBER 21, 1971

THE MILITARY SELECTIVE SERVICE ACT

I rise to speak to the problem of the draft, one which has occupied the attention of the Senate throughout a long and arduous legislative process begun last winter and carried forward to culmination in the legislation now under consideration. This bill is the careful product of hearings, study, debate, compromise, passage by the House and Senate and approval by a conference of both bodies. It is a well-considered, thoroughly studied and vitally important bill. It meets a crucial national need, and it should be passed without further delay.

RESPONSIBLE APPROACHES TO ENDING THE DRAFT

The Senator from Kansas has long been an advocate and supporter of filling the manpower needs of the armed forces through voluntary enlistments. Ending reliance on the draft is an extremely important national goal, but that goal must be achieved in a responsible way.

The draft system -- and its replacement by something better -- are issues too important to be treated unsystematically and in the heat of emotional appeals to the anxieties of the people. Responsible men in both the Congress and the Executive Branch have devoted months to serious and thorough investigation of how best to end the draft and with what better system it might be replaced.

Many Senators and Congressmen have labored conscientiously, conducting hearings and research, to address this question systematically and to offer constructive proposals. The President has submitted a comprehensive plan for an all-volunteer army by June 1973, and as the war winds down, we are on the verge of seeing the idea become a reality in carefully developed stages.

But a volunteer army will not come into being without serious thought and planning. A majority of both Houses of Congress confirmed this fact when they voted to extend the draft for another two years. To block the draft through procedural delay with no consideration of an alternative system, and with no regard for the consequences, is no solution.

It would be unfortunate if the intemperance of feeling peculiar to debate on Indochina were allowed to infect the very process of orderly legislation. The legislative process has run its course on this bill; the collective judgment has been rendered. To obstruct this bill further does no service to the American people, for the draft bill in its current state has ceased to be an appropriate vehicle for criticism of Indochina policy.

MAINTENANCE OF THE ARMED FORCES' QUALITY

In the context of this discussion, I would also like to point out that the delay or failure of this bill would seriously impair the quality of our armed forces.

Contrary to the speculation of some, the result of Congress's failure to provide the President promptly with continued draft authority is severe. In the interval between today and the creation of an all volunteer army (by June 1973 under the President's plan), Department of Defense studies confirm that the authority to draft is vital to maintain enlistments at the minimum level needed to meet today's defense needs; for our armed forces at the end of FY 1972 will be trimmed by 245,000 and will still require about 2.45 million men. To

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maintain these forces will require 500,000 new men, almost half of whom will be needed by the army. However, we know that volunteers will meet only half of these requirements. The other half under present circumstances is provided by draftees and men who enlist because they are subject to the draft. The increase in military pay and other expenditures recommended by the conference will increase voluntary enlistments significantly. But in the absence of a draft, even with the proposed pay increase, volunteers will meet only three-quarters of our overall military manpower needs and less (or about two-thirds) of the manpower needed to support the U.S. Army.

The inescapable conclusion is that, if the draft bill dies, America's military strength will decline dramatically; the U.S. Army will lose the equivalent of about one combat division per month. By the fall of 1972, the Army's strength will level off at a total strength of about 7 divisions -- compared to the 13 divisions we need, and contrasted further to the 16 divisions we maintained prior to Vietnam. The other services will suffer comparable proportionate reductions in capability.

Such a drastic and precipitate collapse of American military strength cannot be advocated by responsible men. The effect on the entire spectrum of our strategic relations would be immediate and devastating -- no less in London and Bangkok than in Moscow and Peking.

Certainly this cannot be allowed to come about because of impulsive impatience for ending the draft. The President is already committed to end this nation's peacetime reliance on the draft by June 1973. In fact, under his plan, our forces will probably require inducting fewer than 60,000 men between June 1971 and June 1972 out of over two million men coming of age during this period -- less than 3%. In the following year, our reliance on the draft to meet military manpower requirements will be even less.

HAZZARD TO MILITARY REFORM

The impact of no draft authority is not just a problem of numbers. Over the past twelve months, President Nixon has moved positively to improve the combat readiness of our forces and especially of those not assigned duties related to Vietnam. Studies conducted by the Department of Defense indicate that many of the problems associated with lagging army discipline, morale, and poor performance are directly related to the drawdowns forced on our units here at home and in Europe. The rebuilding of these units has already been a contribution to overcoming the scars of Vietnam. Failure to continue with the draft will place the progress made thus far, and the improvements still required, in great jeopardy.

Thus an undeserving victim of this irresponsible attempt to frustrate the legislative process is the American G.I. The critics of the war do not hesitate to exploit him in his suffering and his hardships to suit their legislative ends, but they have not the slightest hesitation in threatening his security by forcing severe shortfalls, and they would dismiss his long overdue pay raise, lifting him at last above the poverty minimum, with a legislative wave of the hand.

The pay recommendations in the Conference Report are clearly adequate and fully responsive to service needs.

For enlisted personnel with under two years' service, the pay provisions in the Conference Report would eliminate completely the inequities in pay rates which have evolved since 1952. On a cumulative basis, 1952-1971, the basic pay increases in the Conference Report represent an increase of 189 per cent for the "under 2" category compared to 151 per cent for career members.

A decision on applying the wage-price freeze to the military pay increases will be deferred until passage of the bill in its present form.

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STRATEGIC BALANCE OF POWER

The prolonged delay or failure of the draft bill would have undesirable effects far beyond the well-being of our military institutions. It would reduce the capabilities of the United States to react to potential regional conflicts in areas of the world deemed critical to our strategic interests.

While strategic sufficiency is most popularly seen in the more publicized components of the sufficient defense capability, the very foundation of strategic deterrence is an efficient, mobile, well-trained force of men in place. Without conventional forces, a President in a crisis would be left with no choices except capitulation or strategic nuclear war. To degrade and diminish this element below the strategic minimums -- at which level we have arrived -- puts the balance of parity in jeopardy as surely as scrapping numbers of minutemen, or substantial increases in the Soviet ICBM Force.

Because of the sustained drive by the Soviets to gain strategic parity and now apparently superiority in nuclear and conventional weaponry, the overall military balance is now measured in very small increments -- the fine measure of sufficiency. The magnitude of the shift caused by shortfalls of 15,000 per month would cause this even balance to be tipped suddenly and dramatically. Sufficiency would, within short months, become strategic inferiority. The state of the global balance directly affects both America's options and potential adversaries' assessment of their opportunities. Every crisis area of the world would be immediately affected.

IMPACT ON AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

The effects upon the Middle East situation would be disastrous. The ability of the U.S. to react promptly and effectively with ground forces throughout the Middle East, as was done in Lebanon in 1958, has been an essential deterrent to Arab and Soviet adventurist temptations. The Jordanian crisis in September 1970 (The Syrian Invasion of Jordan, and the bold but discreet movement of U.S. forces in Europe and the Mediterranean) was a dramatic example of the stabilizing influence of American military power. This very capability -- as well as our global power to deter -- would immediately be called into question.

In Europe, where diplomacy is more fluid today than at any time in the last twenty-five years, unilateral slashing of U.S. military power would undercut the entire bargaining position -- and very possibly the unity -- of the Western Alliance. The result would be not detente (as some people think) but an imbalance of power on the Continent, and overbearing pressures on Western Europe from the Soviet Union. The President's approach -- keeping our pledges to our allies and bargaining on an equal basis with the East -- has proven its value in the Berlin Talks.

Communist China's principal interest in normalizing relations with the U.S. is to seek a counterbalance to Soviet power. If the U.S. dismantles its military establishment and withdraws precipitately from Asia, China will have no interest in maintaining a dialogue with the U.S.

A deplorable consequence of the lapse of the draft will be the impact upon our allies and friends, especially in Europe. In going more than halfway for peace, in our discussions with the Soviets, the Berlin Agreement, our pending discussions with the Chinese, our economic policies -- we have depended upon and fully taxed the trust and forbearance of our friends that we would not fail them in maintaining the strategic balance upon which their very existence or independence in many cases depends. If this balance collapses through the lapsing of the draft, the consequences are likely to be of historic proportions.

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Around the world, our allies and friends fear a new wave of isolationism in America. Thirty years ago we were isolationist because we thought we were better than everybody else; today many are isolationist because they think we are worse than everybody else -- but the disastrous effect on peace and stability in the world would be the same. What would be more suggestive of a plunge into isolationism than such an impulsive and devastating blow against the very military establishment that underpins our capacity to contribute to peace in the world?

CONCLUSION

The enactment of a draft bill is indispensable to the maintenance of our security and the conduct of our foreign policy. In no recent period of history has the maintenance of a strong defense posture been more crucial as the underpinning of an effective diplomacy. The President's dramatic achievements thus far have been the achievements of a nation determined to remain strong, to defend its interests, and to bargain patiently and seriously to resolve conflicts. To undermine this posture in the eyes of our adversaries and our friends would be a blow to our hopes for an era of negotiation and a generation of peace.