

Military planning draft — maybe war

Analysis by
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Of the Emerald

Military efforts to improve the "effectiveness of the peacetime force" seem to be aimed at building up troops for war — not reserves for peace.

A recent report by the U.S. comptroller general outlines proposed action by the Secretary of Defense to "meet defense mobilization needs." Included in these proposals are plans to recall retirees, draft veterans, lower physical standards for enlistment, begin draft registration for active duty and draft for the Individual Ready Reserves.

The most controversial of these proposals is the drafting of veterans. The report notes that this move would "raise multiple questions, be subject to court suits and be the subject of heated debate." In addition, Congress would be reluctant to pass legislation that allows drafting of veterans, due to the "inequity of placing an additional burden of responsibility on those who have already served." In spite of this anticipated opposition, defense officials keep bringing the subject up.

Nine bills were introduced in Congress this year that would begin peacetime draft registration. The strongest of these is tacked onto a defense department appropriation bill, HB 4040, which currently is stalled in the House. Under HB 4040, registration would begin in 1981 for 18-year-old males.

The Senate is waiting for the House vote on that bill before it decides on its own Senate bill that calls for draft registration of males 18-26 years old beginning in January.

If opposition to draft registration for active forces is strong enough to defeat the bills, another alternative is proposed: a limited draft for the Individual Ready Reserves.

According to the report, this plan would "insure a functioning Selective Service System, result in a probable delivery of new inductees earlier than currently planned and reduce the number of pretrained individuals needed after mobilization."

Under the IRR "draft scheme," 490,000 individuals could be trained each year. Draftees would receive four months of basic and advanced

training and would then be liable for immediate recall for the following eight months.

"The resistance to the IRR draft could be considerably less than resistance to a return to selective service inductions for the active forces," the report says.

But defense officials remember opposition to the Vietnam War.

"Careful consideration would have to be given to the polarization of the U.S. society which occurred during the Vietnam War and draft years and whether this polarization would return if an IRR draft is implemented," the report notes.

The Secretary of Defense also plans to lower the physical standards for enlistment.

"There is evidence that the standards have been unnecessarily high, a luxury that was permissible during the draft years but is questionable in the limited marketplace of the All-Volunteer Force," the report says. It cites a study by the Rand Corporation, which concludes that physical standards were higher than the entry standards for armed forces in other advanced nations. The study also concluded that there could be a 40 percent reduction in the

rejection rate if standards were lowered.

Peace isn't mentioned very often in the report. The report cites replacement figures of 200,000 during the first three months of war. This figure reflects a move from conventional war tactics to limited tactical nuclear warfare. If these replacement figures are correct, in three months the number of injuries and deaths would be equal to half of the injuries and deaths in the Vietnam War and

one-third of those in World War II.

These proposals and predictions seem to be part of a full mobilization plan for war with the Middle East. Other components are the formation of a "Unilateral Strike Force" of 10,000 soldiers for trouble spots other than Europe, the recall of 4,060 retired army personnel, and the reported change from jungle to desert camouflage and maneuvers in the armed services.



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Draft registration bill stalled in Congress until September

Voting on a bill that includes a provision that calls for draft registration of 18-year-old males beginning Jan. 1, 1981, has been stalled until September by the U.S. House of Representatives.

HB 4040, a defense department appropriation bill, had been scheduled for debate, amendments and a vote in the House for two weeks, but the House pushed the bill aside in favor of other legislation. Congress began its summer recess Saturday and is due back in early September.

Opponents of the bill, which also asks for presidential studies on the feasibility of registering and drafting women, the feasibility of waiving the privacy act to allow military access to citizen records and an answer on the extent of presidential power to reinstitute draft registration, are unhappy with the delay, says Dave Fidanque, an aide to U.S. Rep. Jim Weaver, D-Ore.

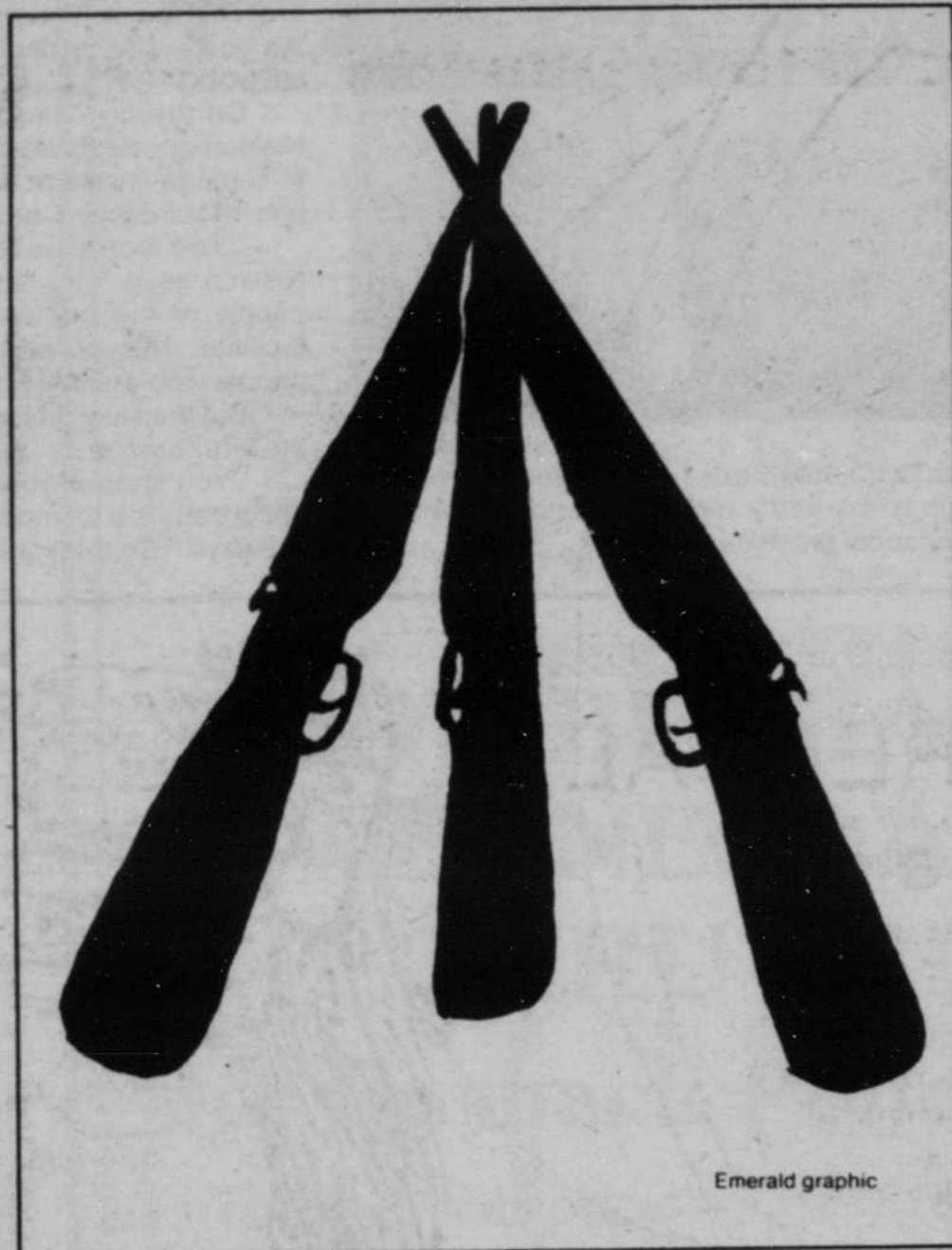
"It's not to our (registration opponents) advantage to stall now," Fidanque says. "We'd be less nervous about it if the final vote had happened last week."

Fidanque says he is "confident" that opponents of the registration provision had enough votes last week to put registration into the presidential study area of the bill.

Although Fidanque says the importance of other bills, such as gas rationing legislation, held back the vote on HB 4040, he says the delay may have also been a tactical move by proponents of draft registration.

"It's a possibility — although there is no way to substantiate it — that proponents of registration began to realize that things weren't going their way," he says.

Fidanque says that although he believes the House had en-



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ough votes to move draft registration into the study area last week, those votes are unstable and could change over the summer recess with a little pressure.

"Lobbying from the other side could have an effect," he says, adding that a lot of representatives are still uncertain on which way they are going to vote on the issue.

According to Fidanque, two of the four representatives from Oregon are still "on the fence," Robert Duncan, D-Ore, and Al Ullman, D-Ore. Fidanque adds

that Les AuCoin, D-Ore, "still has one leg up on the fence, although he is leaning toward our side." Weaver is opposed to draft registration.

In a letter to Weaver July 23, Stuart Eizenstat, domestic affairs and policy assistant to Pres. Carter, said the administration is opposed to new legislation reinstating draft registration in peacetime.

But Fidanque says opponents of draft registration fear that Carter may be forced to "give in" to draft registration to get SALT II passed by Congress.

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