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National Commission on Military, National and Public Service

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2530 Crystal Drive, Suite 1000, Room 1029

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Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my personal comments to the Commission on the subject of military service, national and public service. I will address each of these elements. First some background.

I am a veteran, having served as a commissioned line officer in the Navy during the Vietnam war. I entered in 1968, via Navy Officer Candidate School in Newport, Rhode Island, before the establishment of the lottery system. My motivation at that time was not out of a sense of duty to serve in the military at all, given that the Vietnam war was never a war of national security or otherwise in the national interest. I only entered the Navy to avoid being drafted into ground troops where I would directly be required to kill others, and possibly be killed. I admit that my serving as a Naval officer was in part an act of self preservation, a probability judgment. I did survive where more than 50,000 others from our country did not, and countless others were injured, physically and mentally; and millions of Vietnamese were killed in an unnecessary war. At the time I was also accepted into the Peace Corps, but it did not ensure that I would not be subsequently drafted into military service.

I must also state that every conflict and war that the USA has engaged in since Vietnam and even before also fail the test of being necessary wars of national security purpose. And I will note that none of these military actions, including my service during the Vietnam war have ever been formally approved by the U.S. Congress as required by our Constitution. Therefore, all wars since World War II have been totally illegal. And individuals who have served, including me, whether by draft or by voluntary service have been complicit in violating our most fundamental laws of this country, and often in violation of numerous international laws and treaties. That simply must stop.

Military Service –

The military of the United States is intended to be for the defense of our country and the security of its people, as stated in the U.S. Constitution. In fact, there was never an intent by our founding fathers who wrote our Constitution to have a standing army. The only standing military force authorized by our Constitution is a naval force. The other branches of the military, army, air force, marines are only allowed to exist for a maximum period of two years, not be perpetual. (see Article I, Section 8). But our Constitution has been grossly corrupted by other motivations, heavily for the benefit of the corporations that derive their profits from perpetually preparing for and executing wars and interventions outside of our borders. And our Congress has likewise been corrupted to serve those corporate interests by dark money and unlimited campaign financing and perks from their personal political positions.

Beyond this illegality of the U.S.A. wars and “conflicts”, history proves that wars and use of violence and forcing others to submit to suppression by exercise of power is ineffective in almost all situations. Peaceful means of resolving conflicts among parties and nations do work, but are rarely given the opportunity to occur. Finding security is only achieved in its fullest sense when parties on all sides of disagreement and conflict can feel secure, and actually be secure. Security is not a one way street in which one side wins and the other sides submit or are suppressed.

Our Constitution, as amended, provides for freedom on religion and its free exercise. A religion need not be a formal personal membership in any particular recognized faith institution...but is a personal belief that guides one’s ethical and moral actions in life. For many, including me, this includes a belief that using violence against other people or nations should never occur, and is a personal and religious principle. I affiliate with the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), which I and that faith group have as a founding principle the testimony of peace and harmony. Participating in military adventures and interventions, and bloody wars are in violation of that testimony.

Following are my answers to some of the questions posed by the Commission:

1. Is a military draft necessary to U.S. national security?

My answer is a definite no. The military draft violates personal freedoms guaranteed by our Constitution, as well as being in violation of the illegality of a standing army.

2. Are modifications to the Selective Service System needed?

Yes, modifications are needed.

- The Selective Service System should be dismantled.
- And in particular the mandatory registration of age eligible persons should be abandoned.
- No critical skills or professions should be forced into compulsory service, military or otherwise.
- No registration should be extended to include mandatory registration of females.
- In association with the elimination of military draft registration, all national, state and local laws and regulations associated with denying public services to individuals who do not

register must be eliminated. These are unjust penalties. This would include involuntary registration that happens in Colorado when a person applies for a state issued drivers license or ID card. Public benefits should not be tied to draft registration, such as obtaining in-state tuition at colleges, or obtaining federal or state assistance loans for education, or for any other public service such as access to health care, etc.

- If the decision is made to retain the Selective Service System, a provision for individuals to initially register as a conscientious objector must be included, easily done at time of registration. Since many individuals currently enter the military because of reality or perception that they cannot find employment elsewhere (sometimes called the "poverty draft"), the ability to voluntarily leave the military must be provided through a rapid and easy process, including decisions of conscience objection arrived at by individuals after joining, and during both active duty and reserve duty status. Many individuals will not achieve this clarity that doing violence against others is wrong until faced with the actual order to do so.

3. How can the USA increase participation in military, national and public service for critical skills for national security and other public service to the nation?

Military service should never be a mandatory requirement of individuals, for reasons noted previously. It should only be voluntary, solely by personal freedom of choice, never compulsory, and only for providing true security under the principles of ensuring mutual security for all parties in any conflict. The military can improve participation by ensuring that the USA does not enter into foreign and domestic wars and interventions, such as the history of every undeclared war and act of violence since WW-II. The corruption of the military by its vast and limitless budgets is diverting the ability of our nation to build true security by making people secure both at home and by service to the disadvantaged people of the world. The military recruitment process should not include legal access to young people of draft age or below in our nation's primary and secondary schools, as is now mandated under the "no child left behind act". That activity is conducted using enticements by recruiters who routinely make all kinds of promises that are not, cannot be kept once enlistment contracts are read in the fine print and in duty assignments. This even includes promises to non-citizen residents who are promised a pathway to citizenship, which has recently been rescinded, breaking those promises. Individuals must only sign up on their own volition and out of their own personal interest.

Public service, interpreted to mean service in other components of government, is likewise a personal freedom of choice, and must not ever be made compulsory. I once was a federal government employee, the U.S. EPA, but left that agency when the job ceased to be professionally challenging, and began to fail in its legal mission, and even later became corrupted by corporate influence/infiltration to degrade it's public service function of serving to protect the public health and safety of people and to the environment. The same thing has happened to numerous government agencies, examples being USDA, FDA, agencies of Dept of Interior, HHS, Dept of State, Dept of Commerce, etc. Today's elected government leadership has further corrupted the EPA and so many agencies by destroying their scientific integrity and

its credibility and the ability to do their intended missions. Today's administration in particular is damaging the sense and even desire to become a public servant, by its demeaning of public employees, even to the extent of silencing, demoting, and otherwise sanctioning government employees who speak out with truths, and who seek to restore the integrity and trust within the agencies and departments. Individual employees in government must understand that they will be trusted, will be supported to conduct their jobs with honor, not discredited and even fired for their integrity and ethical principles. Finally, government's purpose to serve the public must be restored. Our democracy of the people must be restored. The present capture of government by special and corporate interest must come to an end. Then public service can once again be an honorable path for individuals to enter.

National Service - National service is a very good objective. I personally support the concept that citizens and legal residents of our nation should be encouraged to engage in national service. That can be achieved through voluntary public service in government, or by innumerable other paths in private lives, including for-profit businesses, non-profit organizations, by participating in elected public offices, and even in solely personal endeavors to help others, or even by leading exemplary lives in their chosen paths. For example, our nation is in great need of a new cadre of individuals, actually millions of people, serving the public by providing safe, non-toxic foods to meet the daily needs of our population. Other examples include engaging in building the security of people in our own country and around the world, especially in the many countries where our nation has instead imposed military intervention and aggression, either directly or by providing military arms to other countries that suppress their own people and neighbors (numerous examples continue on all continents). The better path and only path that will be successful for peace and security is through aid provision of real human and environmental needs: health care, support in providing clean air and water, assistance with food security, service to liberate women and ethnically and racially oppressed peoples, and in particular working diligently to disengage from climate disruption/damaging fossil fuel dependencies, replacing this world security threat by truly responsible and sustainable energy, transportation, agriculture and construction.

Several of the other questions posed by the Commission for public comment input are embodied in my comments provided above.

Overall, the way to peace and security is by sharing it equitably among all parties. A world of dominating nations and oppressed nations will not be secure for either side. Only by practicing peace, equality, honoring of community, fully supporting integrity, and pursuing fully sustainability of our environment can we all become secure and live our lives to the fullest human potential.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide my comments to the Commission.

Sincerely,

Richard D. Andrews

