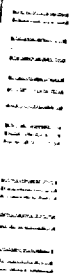


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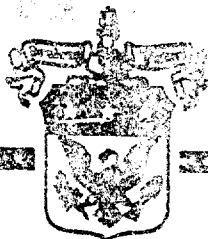
NATIONAL SERVICE: A RESPONSIBILITY, A SOLUTION

BY

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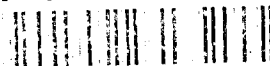
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NATIONAL SERVICE: A RESPONSIBILITY, A SOLUTION
AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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ABSTRACT

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In the wake of the end of the Cold War, an outcry from the American public was heard for spending "peace dividend" monies on domestic issues. However, before any significant domestic programs could be initiated the country became involved in "Operation Desert Storm" which placed domestic spending issues on hold. This study presents national service as a means of solving some of the socioeconomic problems facing the nation during the decade of the 1990's and into the 21st Century. The author reviews international applications of national service programs and presents historic examples of national service use in the United States. An extensive presentation of demographic data demonstrates anticipated changes during the next 10 to 20 years. The data highlights some of the domestic problems and challenges the changes are expected to pose. Selected national service legislation is examined with emphasis toward possible application as a solution to domestic problems. Finally, the author presents conclusions and implications of the widespread implementation of a national service program.

INTRODUCTION

Forty-five years ago the United States entered into the Cold War and what was to become an expensive and pervasive nuclear arms race. The many campaigns of that war were fought on battlefields which spanned the globe. The War's most graphic representation, the Berlin Wall, in its fall was to become the most vivid symbol of our victory.

In the wake of successfully meeting the challenges of the Cold War, the country began an outcry for domestic use of the "peace dividend" expected to be realized therefrom. However, only 10 months after collapse of the Berlin Wall, the country faced a "line in the sand" of the Arabian Desert. The line would eventually be blown away by a "Desert Storm" that would be short, violent and expensive. While the final tally of its costs has not yet been completed, it is certain to erode any "peace dividends" that might have been realized from the Cold War's termination.

In spite of Desert Storm's costs, the outcry for application of "peace dividends" to domestic issues is likely to rapidly resurface. The domestic issues we face, drug abuse, educational inadequacies, homelessness, health care, child care, an aging population, poverty, and environmental misuse to name a few, are monumental and represent as great a challenge domestically as the Cold War and Desert Storm did internationally.

Successful handling of the domestic challenges and problems facing us during the decade of the 90's and into the 21st Century

require monumental action and undertakings by our citizenry. It is the thesis of this paper that a comprehensive program of national service, though not a panacea, is a viable and necessary starting point for meeting head-on and solving several of those challenges.

Before proceeding further it is necessary that national service be defined.

As a general term it refers to a period of service given by the individual to the nation or community. National service embodies two complementary ideas: one, that some service to the larger society is part of individual citizenship responsibility; and two, that society should be structured in ways which provide citizens with opportunities to make meaningful contributions."¹

BACKGROUND

National service is not a new idea nor is it uniquely American. Examples date back as early as 6000 years ago when the Egyptians used it to build dikes and canals for flood control along the Nile River. For centuries the Chinese employed a national service type program to improve agriculture through irrigation, drainage and terracing.²

National service may be divided into two general categories--military service and national development service.³ Military service, whether it is voluntary or conscripted, is the highest form of national service one can render to the country. Military service in the classic sense is self-explanatory and need not be further defined. This paper will provide no further discussion concerning military service but will focus instead on the subject of national development service.

National development service is comprised of four subcategories; "1) training and employment programs, 2) study-services, 3) social and technical development services, and 4) foreign volunteer services."⁴ Current examples of one or more of these types of programs exists in Kenya, Nigeria, Indonesia, France, Germany, and the United States. A brief discussion of several of these will facilitate understanding of how they function and benefit a nation.

Kenya's National Youth Service (KNYS) is a training and employment program. Established in September 1964, shortly after the country's independence, the program focused on providing job skills and enhanced employment opportunities for the largely uneducated and unemployed youth population. The program has had the added benefit of focusing the attention of the participating youth toward nationalism and the needs of the nation while deemphasizing ethnic differences and multitribal interests.⁵

The KNYS is voluntary. Those accepted for service must be Kenyan citizens, 16-30 years old, healthy, unemployed, and without dependents. The period of service is full time for 2 years. There are usually about 50 applicants per service vacancy with hopes of later employment and educational access being the major motivators for volunteer youth to serve.⁶

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) of Nigeria is a study service. Study service programs are usually established to more closely engage higher education into the needs of the community and development of the nation. The Nigerian program, established in 1972, is compulsory for all university students

upon obtaining their first degree. The period of service is for one year. Compliance is assured by issuance of a discharge certificate upon completion of service. Employers are legally bound to request and obtain the discharge certificate prior to finalizing employment agreements.⁷

Like many countries in Africa, Nigeria's population is very diverse. The country's national service program was established following the severe civil strife of the Biafran War. Because the program requires its participants to work in areas other than their home states, a major benefit obtained from it has been promotion of intercultural understanding and the bridging of ethnic and religious differences among the multitribal interests of the Nigerian population.⁸

National service in Indonesia is called Badan Urusan Tenaga Kerdja Sukarela (BUTSI). It is a social and technical development program that was established in the late 60's. The BUTSI is voluntary and entails two years of full time service by university graduates or persons with a sufficient level of technical training.⁹

This type of program is intended to meet community needs for specific services as well as to satisfy individuals' desires to participate in society. Service needs might include health care, care for the elderly and for children, assistance and advice to small businesses, community development and education, environmental protection, etc. To work well, technical and development programs require participation by well-educated persons.¹⁰

During the late 1960's Indonesia had excess college-educated persons concentrated in its urban areas. This was due to the perception of many that educated persons working in rural areas were less qualified than those who were comparably trained and working in urban centers. BUTSI made service in rural areas a condition of enrollment. Assistance was rendered in the rural communities in a variety of areas ranging from adult literacy education to construction of community sanitary facilities. The negative perception has been turned around and the rural communities have improved their standards of living.¹¹

Examples of the fourth subcategory, foreign volunteer services, may be found in several countries of the western world. These services are different from those outlined previously in that their main focus is not domestic. Foreign volunteer services have an international focus in that they provide assistance to other lesser-developed nations. Germany, France and the United States all have similar foreign volunteer service programs in effect. The Peace Corps of the United States is a well-known program of this type. The German and French programs are comparable to our Peace Corps and are accepted as alternatives to military service.¹²

Aside from the Peace Corps, other historical precedence exists for national service in the United States. The most familiar example dates from the Great Depression during the 1930's. The Depression and its resultant unemployment were the basis for the New Deal creation of two major national service programs--the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the National

Youth Administration (NYA). Both programs initially focused on unemployment among the country's youth and were federally funded.¹³

Originally created in 1933 as a temporary work relief program for unemployed youth, as the depression grew worse, the CCC was expanded to accept any unemployed male citizen. It was changed from a temporary to a standing program and functioned as the country's largest such national service program until the 1940's when the country started to prepare for World War II. The program enjoyed widespread popularity and made significant contributions to the country in the area of environmental conservation. The program was operated on a segregated basis. Black participants made up about 8 percent of the total enrollment. This was well under their share of unemployed youth in the country.¹⁴

The NYA was the country's second largest national service program. Though created during the same time-frame as the CCC, the NYA was different from its CCC counterpart in several respects. Unlike the CCC which was chiefly a rural program, the NYA existed primarily in the cities. Participants in the NYA lived at home and did not wear uniforms.¹⁵

Recruits for the NYA were from a more socially diverse cross section of the country's population than the CCC. About half of the NYA participants were women. Racial minorities were included in the NYA to a much greater degree than in the CCC. The program had a special Office of Negro Affairs, whose head, Mary McLeod Bethune, served as a liaison between the Roosevelt

Administration and the black community. The NYA did not discriminate against blacks and used segregation only where doing otherwise would have provoked violence.¹⁶

Since much of the NYA's work was part time, many of the participants were college students looking for part-time work. The NYA program was the beginning of the Federal Government's contributions towards individuals' higher education. This portion of the program would later become known as work-study. From a fiscal viewpoint, the most significant difference between the NYA and the CCC was that the NYA provided its services at half the cost of the CCC.¹⁷

NATIONAL SERVICE: DO WE NEED IT?

Most students of American History would readily agree that conditions in the country today are not as bad as they were during the depression years of the 1930's. Why then is national service on our country's agenda? Do we really need such a program in the United States? The answers to these questions lie both in the principles on which our country was founded, and in recent social, economic and cultural trends in our society.

The principles of freedom, democratic participation in government, and personal duty to both the community and the nation itself are the bed rock of this country. Inherent in these principles is the premise that duty and responsibility go "hand in hand" with rights and privileges. In other words, "freedom is not free." The idea of a citizen's responsibility to

serve his country was expressed well by Elihu Root. According to Mr Root:

It is a mistake to suppose that a people can have good government, peace, order, and progress for any long period without any effort on their part. We in the United States need to have our patriotism awakened, to throw off our indifference, and to think more of our duties as well as our rights. Everyone who is fit to be a citizen of a free country ought to be willing to serve the country.¹⁸

Recent trends have been to focus on individual rights almost to the exclusion of any commitment to community or personal duty to society. It has been stated that "America is more and more coming to look like a random collection of atomized individuals, bristling with rights and choices but with no connectedness or responsibility for one another."¹⁹ This trend has its roots in the 60's according to Congressman Dave McCurdy:

. . . Presidents Kennedy and Johnson proposed programs to help those most in need. . . [W]hat began as aid programs to address national needs were eventually viewed by some Americans as economic and social entitlements for which no debt of service was incurred. Widespread dissatisfaction with military conscription during the Viet Nam years also helped weaken America's sense of citizenship. In the [70's and] 80's, the "me first" generation, by encouraging selfishness, chiseled away even more at the idea of service to others.²⁰

American society is a dynamic institution. The profound social change between the 1960's and 1990's, which is projected to continue well into the next century, poses pressing national needs, challenges and problems. The entire population, young and old, can and should play a part in meeting these needs and

challenges. A comprehensive national service program will provide them an opportunity to serve society.

The youth of the country today (18--24 years old) are the products of the former youth of the 1960's. The 60's generation was active socially and politically, with the Civil Rights Movement and the Viet Nam War serving as chief catalysts for their actions. In contrast, today's youth have been characterized by some as apathetic, apolitical, and materialistic. Others say that this is a misperception and that today's youth are willing to be involved and committed if given an opportunity to do so. The latter point of view is corroborated by this statement from the House of Representatives in its background and need statement included in the National and Community Service Act of 1990:

Polls indicate youth want to serve. A 1980 survey, for example, found that roughly 92% at 14 to 20 years-old wanted to participate in improving their communities. The findings of a 1985 Gallup poll suggest that Americans act on this desire: About 89 million people, nearly one-half of all Americans 14 years or older, volunteered, including 52% teenagers. Pollster, Louis Harris, corroborates the Gallup findings in a 1985 survey, concluding that the "youth population has been misnamed the self-centered generation. There is a strong desire to serve others. The problem we face in America today is not a lack of willingness to serve or to help others but to find the appropriate outlet...."²¹

To find an appropriate outlet, one need only look at some of the internal (social, economic, educational, etc.) problems which exist in the nation today. The family, the basic unit of our society and the medium through which our children's formative

years experiences of the world's events are filtered, is changing.²² In 1960 a typical American family consisted of a husband, who worked outside the home, a wife, who did not work and 3 or more children. In the typical family today, both the husband and wife work outside the home and they have 3 or less children.²³ Another factor impacting on the changing family is single parenthood. Divorce and unmarried pregnancies are the primary contributors to this situation. Statistics show that of families with children in 1960, those households headed by both parents, equalled 75 percent. In 1988, this figure was down to 58 percent.

These trends raise some interesting socialization and child care concerns. With both parents (or the only parent in single-parent households) away from their children during most of the children's waking hours, the family's traditional role in the socialization of these children is diminished. Two fundamental questions are raised by these circumstances. First, will the children develop a sense of civic duty and responsibility of service to the community if those types of values are not taught and reinforced through observation of parental participation in such activities? And second, how much time do parents have to set the right example of community service when both of them work outside the home?

Possible socialization disruptions notwithstanding, working parents need child care services for their children. Simply providing supervision of the children is not enough. Good child care services can fill, at least in part, the void created by

parental absence. They can teach helping, caring for and being concerned about others as well as providing opportunities for children to grow through association with peers and adults other than parents. Parents' awareness of the positive benefits of preschool (as a form of child care) in the development of their children is growing. This growth, however, is not without concern as noted by Kamerman:

[A] major concern is the possible emergence of a dual system of child care in which children of affluent and well-educated parents attend preschool programs--whether or not their mothers work--and children of low income families use more informal care. As illustration: 53 percent of 3-4 year olds in families with median or higher incomes attended preschool programs in 1982 as contrasted with 29 percent of those in families with lower incomes. Similarly, 72 percent of 4 year olds whose mothers are college graduates were in a preschool program.²⁴

National service could provide adequate child care services for the children of low income families, those families in which both parents are employed, and for single parents. Conceptually, tasks that national service workers might perform could range from cooking, to tutoring, to day care center administration. According to Danzig and Szanton, child care positions which might utilize national service workers are estimated to number between a low of 270,000 to a high of 1.3 million.²⁵ Given the fact that in order for the typical American family to maintain its middle-class status, two incomes are required; it is unlikely that requirements for child care services will be reduced in the near future.²⁶

Poverty is a recalcitrant problem in our society. In spite of several programs designed to alleviate it, "... [poverty] will pose one of the most difficult policy challenges of the 21st Century."²⁷ Depending on which reference source one uses, poverty in this country over the past 30 years can be shown to have either declined or increased. Official federal statistics show a decline from 22 percent of all Americans living in poverty in 1960 to only 13.5 percent in 1987.²⁸

This decline of poverty is certainly a positive trend. However, during the same 30 year period the demographic composition of the poor has also changed. This trend is somewhat troubling. Thirty years ago elderly people had the highest rates of poverty. Now, female-headed households and persons living alone (many of them elderly) are at greatest risk of being poor. "Today, only 12 percent of all elderly persons are regarded as poor, but 20 percent of all children live in poverty."²⁹ As single-parent households become more numerous, and remembering that it now takes two incomes to maintain middle class status, some doubt is created as to what the future holds.

A final note about poverty is that it is found throughout America and not just in urban ghettos. Without assistance, the poverty cycle is tough to break. Socioeconomic mobility is difficult for those living in poverty. The condition itself makes obtaining the tools required to break out of poverty-- , marketable job skills, transportation out of poverty areas into areas where jobs exist, and positive self-esteem (to

name just a few)--a near impossibility. This is certain to be one of the country's most challenging future tasks.³⁰

As institutions and conditions within the population change, so does the population itself. Racial and ethnic minorities are rapidly increasing in population size in America. They account for 20 percent of the United States population today and are expected to rise to almost one-third by the year 2030. Blacks are the largest minority population in the nation. Although blacks comprise 60 percent of all minorities, the Hispanic population is the fastest growing. Asians currently represent about 10 percent of the U.S. minority population and their numbers also are expected to grow.³¹

Minority population increase is not a problem in itself but it does pose some challenges. Major challenges are presented to education systems that must learn to provide instruction to children who use English, if at all, only as a second language. Those systems are further challenged to produce higher quality students than they do currently, as well as to meet increasing needs for technologically astute individuals in the workplace. Meeting this challenge is especially difficult, considering that minority students (excluding Asians) tend to come from homes of less than well-educated parents, which results in their being poorly prepared for the school experience.

National service can help here. By placing well-educated retired volunteers (possibly former educators for example) in the classrooms to assist teachers, perhaps a more favorable tutor to student ratio may be obtained. The individual attention would

produce better students academically. Further, the additional adult supervision in classrooms will likely facilitate a more conducive learning environment from a disciplinary perspective. An income or property tax credit for these retirees based on the amount of hours worked could provide the incentive for them to volunteer.

Much of the anticipated Hispanic and Asian growth is expected to come through immigration. Immigrant groups tend to settle together in the same geographic locations. "Over 70 percent of all recent immigrants have settled in just six states: California, New York, Texas, Florida, New Jersey and Illinois." Within the states they tend to live in the same major metropolitan areas. There are significant political, social and voting implications associated with large homogeneous concentrations of citizens.³² Assimilation and socialization of these citizens through participation in a national service program seems a fitting way to start life in a new homeland.

Another area in which significant demographic change is projected to occur is within the United States labor force. By the year 2000, the following changes are expected:

- a. An older workforce--up from an average age of 36 years now to 39.
- b. More women in the workforce--61 percent of all working aged women will be working. Women will comprise two-thirds of the new entrants in the workforce.
- c. Minorities--participation will double its current share

within the market place, with non-whites equal to 29 percent of the total workforce.

d. Immigrants--two-thirds of all working aged immigrants will be in the workforce, comprising the largest share since WWI.³³

There are implications in these statistics for American employers. The current working man must be educated so that he does not view the large influx of women, minorities and immigrants as threats to his livelihood and future. It is in the interests of business and all employers to engage in such an education process of their employees. Successful education efforts will allow smooth assimilation of the new workforce entrants and will ensure the existence of a potentially profitable and productive work environment.

National service could prove invaluable in the recommended education process. The central point here is that the varied racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and religious groups of this country need close association with each other in order to foster trust, confidence, and understanding among themselves. National service could provide widespread opportunities for people from all facets of society to work together--much as the military does.

Concurrent with more minorities entering the workforce, the work to be done will become more technical in nature. This poses a particular problem for blacks and Hispanics who tend to be less well-educated than whites and Asians. The two largest groups of

minorities will have to compete for declining numbers of low technology, low paying jobs.³⁴

The implication here is for the education system to produce students who are better prepared to face the world of high technology in which they must live, work and compete. Additionally, employers must get involved with the education process to the point of becoming active participants in it. For example, through on-the-job training and cooperative education programs students identified as potential employees could work part time to learn a job, while getting credit for it as a part of their educational experience. This would prove beneficial to both student and potential employer.

The aging workforce discussed above is merely a product of an aging population. In 1950, twelve million people in the United States were 65 years of age or older. Today the figure is 30 million and by 2030 it is expected to be 65 million. Those persons 85 years and older are the fastest growing segment of our society and by 2030 are expected to number 8.6 million. This older segment of the population will require significant amounts of caring services and medical treatments.³⁵

Two opportunities for national service surface in relationship to the elderly of our population. First, the elderly, many of whom are physically infirm, could be either recipients or the subjects of service. According to Danzig and Szanton (quoting a Louis Harris and Associates, Inc survey); "thirteen percent of those over sixty-five report that loneliness is a very serious problem."³⁶ Envision a program whose

participants (servers) did errands, wrote letters for, read to, or just visited with institutionalized or home-bound elderly people. Second, the elderly are themselves a vast national service resource. This fact is substantiated by Danzig and Szanton:

...[E]xisting [national service] programs involving the elderly suggest that many persons over sixty can be induced to volunteer significant amounts of time with only modest incentives. ACTION's \$2-per-hour Foster Grandparents Program, involving approximately 18,000 elderly workers in 1981, was dwarfed that year by the same agency's Retired Senior Volunteer Program. RSVP enlisted almost 320,000 volunteers that year, contributing, by ACTION's estimate, more than 56 million hours of service. ...ACTION paid nothing [for their services] covering only the volunteers' transportation costs and accident and liability insurance. ACTION calculates that 60 percent of these workers were over seventy, and 15 percent were over eighty. Clearly, the desire to volunteer runs well into old age and volunteering is pursued for reasons beyond financial rewards.³⁷

National service is the solution to many of the challenges and problems outlined above. Every citizen and permanent resident of the United States benefits, to some degree, from the rights and privileges guaranteed by the Constitution. Accordingly, every citizen and permanent resident, either directly or indirectly, contributes to the nation's problems. It is now time for every citizen and permanent resident to become a part of the solution to these problems by giving of themselves. National service provides the prime opportunity to accomplish this.

THE FIRST STEP

During the past several years, a variety of different forms of national service have been proposed by various members of Congress. An excellent summary of some of these proposals is presented in the 25 March 1989 Congressional Quarterly. One of them, Nunn/McCurdy (S3,HR660) can be called the first real step toward a comprehensive national service program. The Nunn/McCurdy proposal was comprehensive and provided for service by both young and old, civilian and military. The bill made service in either the military or civilian sector a prerequisite to receipt of vouchers which could be used for either educational benefits or a down payment on a first home. Elderly persons were encouraged to serve but were not included in the voucher benefits. The incentive for their participation was to be paid an hourly wage for more general service consisting primarily of assisting with the administration of the program itself.³⁸

Nunn/McCurdy also included military service under the national service umbrella. Entry requirements for national service military volunteers were to be the same as those established by the Department of Defense and the Armed Forces for career soldier volunteers. A distinction in compensation would have been made between the two groups, with national service soldiers getting less pay than their career soldier counterparts. The post-service benefit for a military national service volunteer would consist of a voucher worth \$24,000 for two years active duty, or \$12,000 for eight years of selected reserve duty.³⁹

A great deal of political controversy and debate surrounded S3/HR660. Many of the country's educational leaders objected to linking financial aid to national service. Their rationale was that by so doing, only those who could not afford to pay for their education would end up serving. It was argued that "the educational aspirations of the poor would be held hostage to public service."⁴⁰

THE LAW

Federal legislation (passed by the Senate on October 16, 1990, the House of Representatives on October 24, 1990, and signed into law by President Bush on November 15, 1990) provides us with a national service program. The National and Community Service Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-610) was passed into law as a demonstration program which means that it is essentially a trial program for the next three fiscal years. The law authorizes 275 million dollars for expenditure in the program over this three year period.⁴¹

Only selected states, on a competitive basis, will have the opportunity to participate in the demonstration program. During the demonstration period, data will be collected and evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the programs created under the law. If a determination is made that the law is effective, then funds can be reappropriated and the law expanded to include more states or the entire nation. If it is determined to be ineffective, then funds likely will not be reappropriated.⁴²

To avoid having administration of the law become an all-consuming federal bureaucracy, many of the programs created by it are to be administered at state and local levels. At the Federal level, there will be a National Service Commission whose primary purpose is to administer the award of Federally provided competitive grants. States apply to the Commission to fund their service proposals. In some cases, if states do not apply, local applicants may apply directly to the Commission for funding. In other cases, if a state applies, the local applicant must seek funding from the state.⁴³ This system has the advantage of causing state and local governments to get involved in the design of the programs under the national service umbrella that will be executed within their jurisdictions.

The law is comprehensive in that it provides opportunities for service by both young and old at the local community and higher levels of government. However, the legislation fails to include some provisions which could have made it more far reaching in terms of encouraging wide range participation. Some of the strong points and the shortcomings of the law are discussed below.

The School-Aged Service (school-aged is defined as 5-17 years of age) portion of the law provides for community service by students engaging in projects organized by their schools. These types of projects are called "service learning" projects and they serve multiple purposes. First, they help the communities in which they are conducted by addressing actual community needs. This is assured by requiring that all service

learning projects be coordinated with official community representatives prior to initiation. Second, the students are given an opportunity to learn about the real life needs of the community in which they live. Third, through their personal involvement in solving the problems, learning is reinforced. The entire process is intended to instill at a relatively early age, the ideal of duty and responsibility to serve one's community.⁴⁴

There are also provisions for adult volunteers to assist with school-aged youth either in or out of school. This is significant because it allows for projects that focus on school drop-outs. The intent of these projects is to improve the educational shortcomings of school drop-outs while also affording them an opportunity to develop a concern for community through meaningful service.⁴⁵

Federal funds granted for these programs must be supplemented by state and/or local funds. The Federal Government will grant up to 90 percent of the cost of a project during its first year. Each subsequent year, for the next 3 years, the Federal portion will decline by 10 percent per year. None of the Federal funds allocated for school-aged projects may be used for stipends.⁴⁶

The Higher Education Innovative Projects for Community Service portion of the law is a study service type model of the type discussed previously as existing in Nigeria. It is intended to support innovative projects that encourage students of institutions of higher education to participate in community

service activities that engender a sense of social responsibility and commitment to community.⁴⁷

This program appears to be particularly well suited for institutions of higher education located in or near inner cities or large metropolitan areas. Consider the benefit that might be derived from tutorial programs conducted by college students for inner city youth. In some circumstances, the college student role model could prove more beneficial than any academic assistance rendered. The law provides for Federal monies to fund a portion (not to exceed 50 percent) of each grant for such a project. The other 50 percent must come from non-Federal sources and may be paid in cash or in kind (such as facilities and equipment).⁴⁸

The American Conservation and Youth Service Corps (ACYSC) programs may be full-time year round, or they may be summer only. Projects must offer productive work with visible community benefits. Projects may be conducted in natural or human resource areas ranging from wildlife habitat improvement to drug and alcohol abuse education. ACYSC projects can not compete with any commercial interests that are providing similar services in the area.⁴⁹

Participants in ACYSC projects must be between 16 and 25 years old for full-time programs, and between 15 to 21 years for summer programs. If the participant is not a high school graduate upon entry into the program, he or she must agree to participate in an educational program to earn a high school diploma or the equivalent while participating in the ACYSC.⁵⁰

ACYSC participants receive a stipend during the time of their service. This stipend is a living allowance equivalent to not less than 100 percent of the poverty line for a family of 2, and not more than 100 percent of minimum wage, whichever is less. Also associated with service in this program is a post-service training and education benefit (such as scholarships and grants) in an amount not to exceed \$100 per week or in excess of \$5000 per year, whichever is less.⁵¹

The National and Community Service Act is the main focus of the law. It is derived from the previously discussed Nunn/McCurdy bill (S3/HR660). Changed by compromises during the legislative process, it is not as comprehensive as S3/HR660 was. Military service is not offered as an option under this law. Post service benefits still include vouchers redeemable for education, down-payment or closing costs on a first-time house purchase. These voucher amounts have also been reduced to \$10,000 for 2 years full-time service, and \$2000 per year for a maximum of 3 years for part-time service. And finally, there is no provision for making national service a prerequisite for obtaining educational financial aid.⁵²

Eligibility for participation in programs under this law is limited to U.S. Citizens or permanent legal residents 17 years of age or older. Participants must have a high school diploma or equivalent, or agree to obtain one while in the program. Senior citizen (60 years or older) service is possible, but without the post service voucher benefit. Stipends are paid to all full-time participants (regardless of age) at a rate not less than 100

percent of the poverty line nor more than 100 percent of minimum wage. Senior citizen part-time participants receive a stipend equal to a portion (prorated according to number of hours service provided) of what a full-time participant receives. Federal funds must be matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis by the states.⁵³

CONCLUSIONS

As we face the decade of the nineties and prepare for entry into the 21st Century, two things are clear. First, as a nation we face monumental social changes and domestic problems; and second, there are no perfect solutions to those problems. This is not to say that we can not or should not attempt to do something about them. To the contrary, we must address the problems, in spite of a lack of perfect solutions. At stake is the preservation of our most precious national resource--our people.

National service is a means by which many of the domestic problems of our nation may be addressed and solved. It is key to note that a particular program or project of national service is not the most important issue here. National service in this context refers to an ideal. The ideal is based on the premise that every citizen recognizes and will honor his or her responsibility to give something back to the country for the rights and privileges they enjoy.

Perhaps one of the most pragmatic challenges to establishing comprehensive national service in the near term is reindulcating in the people of our population a sense of caring for others--a spirit of community. We must be successful in meeting this challenge if we are to realize any degree of success in solving our domestic problems. To be successful in this endeavor the nation's population in general must come to realize and accept the necessity of giving up some of its individual privileges, (which may have come to be regarded as rights) to ensure the rights, privileges and common good of the whole. This is the essence of the meaning of community.

Success in revitalizing a sense of community is conditional on success in selling the ideal of widespread implementation and support of national service in America. Sale of any ideal throughout the American population means dealing with a diversity of people and interests. When the possibility of forfeiting individual privileges for the good of the whole is added to the equation, the sale becomes an even greater challenge.

The great diversity of people and interests in our population need something to pull them together--a commonality of experience and cause that transcends all socioeconomic boundaries and strata of the society. The military has traditionally been the one organization in our society which provided the commonality of cause and experience envisioned here.

A small all volunteer force (expected to become even smaller) will provide fewer opportunities for the country's diverse racial, ethnic and religious groups to meet in common

cause and experience. National service can fill the void and become the "glue" which binds together the varied and diverse facets of the population through homogeneous purpose and experience.

Implied in the idea of national service filling a role previously isolated primarily in the military is the thought that the military, at least in theory, should lend its support to national service. By so doing, the military takes the moral high ground of supporting an ideal which is consistent with its traditional position of fairness, cooperation, nation building and team work among diverse elements of the population.

Military support of national service is fitting from a domestic perspective because the military's basic charter and the basic intent and purpose of national service are essentially the same. The military is committed to "support and defend the constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic." National service is committed to resolution of pressing domestic problems. The socioeconomic problems discussed previously are domestic enemies of the nation. Military support of national service helps to defend against those enemies by allowing national service to fill the socialization and nation building void created by reduced opportunities to serve in the downsized military force.

In spite of the stated implications for military support of national service, clearly a domestic program of such comprehensive magnitude is a political rather than a military initiative. Consequently, its implementation rests with the

legislative and executive branches of our government. Passage of the current national service legislation is clear acknowledgment by the government of its responsibility to provide opportunities and outlets for the citizens to serve their country.

The onus is now on the country's citizens to do their part. Widespread acceptance and participation in national service by the American people will meet the challenges of the future with responsibility and commonality of purpose. The citizens are the key to national service being successful in solving the domestic problems of the nation. The time has come for all Americans to join together and give something back to their communities and their nation; the time has come for national service.

ENDNOTES

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3. Ibid., p. 54.
4. Ibid., p. 55.
5. Ibid., p. 56.
6. Ibid., pp. 55-57.
7. Ibid., p. 58.
8. Ibid., pp. 59-61.
9. Ibid., p. 63.
10. Ibid., pp. 63-64.
11. Ibid., pp. 65-66.
12. Ibid., pp. 66-67.
13. Charles C. Moskos, A Call to Civic Service, pp. 31-32.
14. Ibid., pp. 32-33.
15. Ibid., p.33.
16. Ibid., p. 33.
17. Ibid., p. 33.
18. Martin Anderson, The Military Draft: Selected Readings on Conscription, pp. 393-394.
19. John Leo, "Community and Personal Duty," U. S. News and World Report, 28 January 1991, p. 17.
20. Dave McCurdy, Statement on the National and Community Service Act, pp. 1-2.
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22. Christine Wright, Changing Values, Lecture. Cited with special permission of Dr. Wright. Dr. Wright was a guest lecturer at the U. S. Army War College on 7 March 1991. She spoke in course 108; Contemporary Domestic Issues: Impact on the Military. She is a Sociologist and did her PhD work under the late Dr. Morris Janowitz at the University of Chicago. Dr. Wright is employed as the Associate Insights Director for Young and Rubicam of New York. (The Young and Rubicam firm is the current holder of the U. S. Army recruiting advertising contract.) Dr. Wright is doing research on small town America for a book she is writing on that subject.

23. Carol J. DeVita, et al. America in the 21st Century: A Demographic Overview, p. 6.

24. U. S. Congress, House, Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families, Child Care: Beginning A National Initiative, p. 11.

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28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., pp. 15.

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31. Ibid., pp. 8-9.

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38. U. S. Congress, House, Citizenship and National Service Act of 1989, H. R. 660, pp. 39-47 (Hereafter referred to as H. R. 660).

39. H. R. 660, pp. 43-44.

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42. H. R. Report 101-893, p. H10002.

43. Ibid., p. H9997.

44. Ibid., pp. H9997-H9998.

45. Ibid., p. H9997.

46. Ibid., pp. H9998-H9999.

47. Ibid., p. H9999.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid., pp. H9999-H10001.

50. Ibid.

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53. Ibid.

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