

Draft drop

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It still may be too early to write an obituary for the military draft, but that happy wake almost certainly will come in the near future.

According to Lincoln's Selective Service office, thus far this year conscription has reached draft lottery number 95.

Speculation is the draft call may not go any higher this year. Last year the draft extended through number 125, the year before to 195. In terms of numbers it appears the draft is receding drastically.

Beyond these facts, several future events could seal the death of the draft even more tightly.

The current draft law extends through June 30, 1973, which means the President will have the authority to draft, whether or not he does, until then.

It is extremely doubtful, however, that Congress would renew the draft after that date. Last time the draft came up, it only squeaked by in a neutral Congress. If the Congress retains its current, more dove-like stance until June, there is extreme doubt a draft extension would be approved.

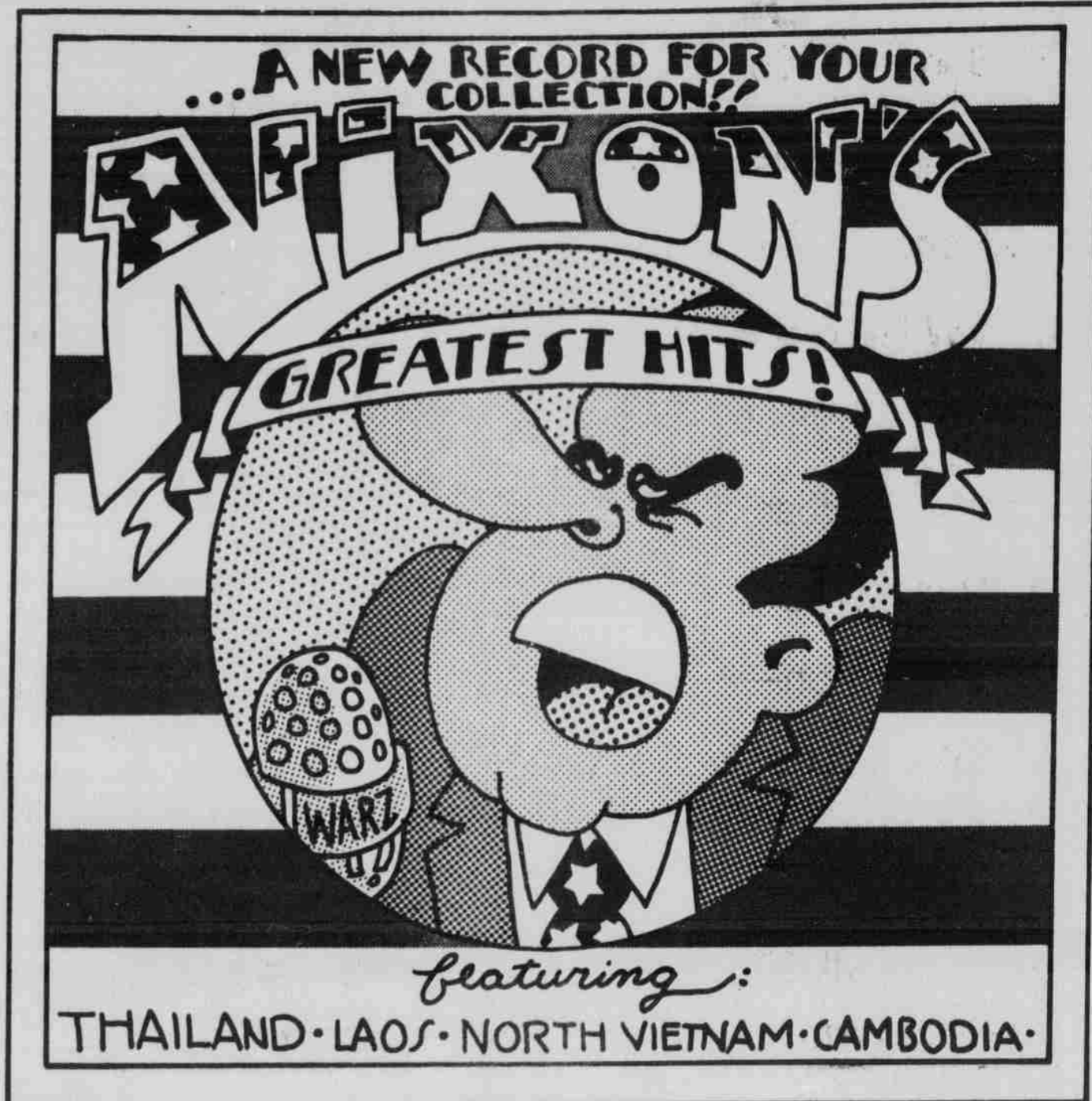
Furthermore, among his multitude of campaign promises, President Nixon has vowed to let the current draft law expire in June, making no effort to retain the drafting privilege.

There have been indications that Nixon intends to keep this promise. The foremost of these is that he has reduced draft calls to the negligible point already this year.

And there is speculation that there may not even be a draft, in effect, after Jan. 1, 1973. According to military sources, 1973 draft calls will depend on the success of recruiting and retention between now and the end of the year.

And it is not impossible to believe that the draft calls actually will cease in December. If re-elected, it is likely that Nixon would want to re-enter office with a wildly exuberant, young audience celebrating the demise of the draft and placated for his coronation. It certainly would buoy up the old Gallups for a few months.

So the draft may die soon, whether in December or June. So much for the near



future. But what about the more distant future?

Recent speculation has been that within a few years the new all-volunteer Army will peter out due to "internal troubles" and military conscription will be reincarnated.

Cited among the foreseen internal problems is that of finding enough army-types to enlist and fill out the ranks. The all-volunteer critics point to President Truman's futile attempt to drop the draft in 1947. They say, "It didn't work then; it won't work now."

Things have changed, however. The administration has based its Army projections on sound data, which compares enlistments from the last, relatively lower draft year with the year before which had high draft pressure. These figures, along with recently-enacted boosts in pay, should answer the numbers prediction.

A second charge, that the Army might become a strictly mercenary force, uncontrolled by civilians, has more substance. It is doubtful that even this would get out of hand however, due to the multiple checks and balances available to the civilian Congress and the courts.

Finally, that the Army could become a "poor people's Army," of those who can't find employment elsewhere, is very possible.

But this can be avoided to some extent by offering greater benefits for college graduates, who are generally of a higher socio-economic status.

It will require much thought and planning to avoid the exploitation of the poor in the new Army.

Even considering its ills, however, the all-volunteer system seems to be the lesser of several evils. If there must be an Army at all, let it be all-volunteer.

Jim Gray

Congress' sightseeing subsidies

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Members of Congress, their families, staff and committee aides spent more than \$1.1 million in public funds for travel abroad in 1971. Congressional trips at public expense cost the American taxpayer an increase of \$289,268 over the 1970 figure, when "only" \$825,118 was devoured in this manner.

Numerically, at least 274 members of Congress made 447 trips at public expense, including 53 senators and 221 representatives, or 51.5 per cent of Congress. An additional 40 members traveled abroad at non-government expense, raising the total to 313 or 58.8 per cent of the Congress who engaged in foreign flings.

Admittedly, congresspeople and senators frequently must travel abroad in pursuit of congressional duties, and it is only fair that when they must do so to further the interests of the United States that the government should foot the bills.

But a question arises as to whether the trip is valid and necessary, or whether it is simply to gratify a congressperson's desire to see foreign lands or for back-home publicity with the taxpayer bearing the burden of the expense.

Members of Congress usually travel abroad in either of two capacities—on congressional (usually committee) business or by executive appointment or request. Not unexpectedly, the privilege of such travel seems to be rather chaotically controlled by the offending body, Congress.

Now it is true that the reporting of expenses incurred on official foreign travel is required by law—Section 502B of the 1954 Mutual Security Act, to be exact. Unfortunately, while these reports are filed with the Senate Appropriations and House Administration Committees, neither the committees, the Government Accounting Office (GAO) nor any other agency has the responsibility of checking these reports. Furthermore, the true cost of travel is easily obscured. Expenses are not completely itemized or audited, and sometimes no transportation cost is reported when it is furnished gratis by the Defense Dept. or the State Dept. In the end, of course, we are the ones who pay for this undeclared

cost, too.

Then there is "counterpart spending," which means expenditure of foreign currencies held by U.S. embassies abroad. Congresspeople are allowed to spend these reserve counterpart sums without repaying it to the Treasury or having it charged against their personal or committee expense budgets—making the thing a kind of extra foreign expense allowance. Some committees also have secret confidential funds, which chairpersons may spend without specific accounting. And, of course, nowhere is there any written justification given as to why lawmakers go outside the United States.

One representative, Charles Diggs (D-Mich.), spent more than 2 full months out of the country, hopping from nation to nation for the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Congressperson Richard Hanna (D-Calif.) and Senator Edward Gurney (R-Fla.) took six trips each in 1971.

Happily, the 5-member Nebraska Congressional delegation exercises a little more discretion than is usual for our lawmakers. Sen. Carl Curtis reported no trips abroad last year. Sen. Roman Hruska, on the other hand, sojourned to no less than seven countries—England, Belgium, the Netherlands, Finland, Germany, Austria and Switzerland—all on "official" Appropriations Committee business at government expense. Our three representatives—Thone, McCollister, and Martin did not travel in 1971.

While we certainly cannot object to a member of Congress traveling where and when he or she can gain insight into conditions that will help him or her in more intelligently guiding American programs and policies, we do protest if it merely is a sightseeing junket with only a pretense of business involved. Apparently, Congress at present has little inclination to define more fully the rules for travel by its members at government expense. It is about time the public call for clearer guidelines in regulating the amount, use and reporting of these exotic expenditures.