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Military Draft System To Be Tested

Officials Say Selective Service Apparatus Is Being Checked, Not Implemented

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 22, 2006



Veterans Affairs Secretary Jim Nicholson in May. (AP Photo/Lawrence Jackson)

(CBS/AP) The Selective Service System is making plans to test its draft machinery in case Congress and President Bush need it, even though the White House says it doesn't want to bring back the draft.

The agency is planning a comprehensive test — not run since 1998 — of its military draft systems, a Selective Service official said. The test itself would not likely occur until 2009.

At the direction of the White House, reports **CBS News correspondent Mark Knoller**, Veterans Affairs Secretary Jim Nicholson is making it clear he is not advocating the reinstatement of a military draft. He told a news conference that society would benefit from a return to the draft, but a few hours later, after the White House disavowed the remark, Nicholson issued a statement in line with administration policy. He said he

QUOTE

"We're kind of like a fire extinguisher. We sit on a shelf."

Scott Campbell, Selective Service

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strongly supports the all-volunteer military and does not support returning to a draft.

President Bush has repeatedly stated that the all-volunteer army would remain all-volunteer.

"We're kind of like a fire extinguisher. We sit on a shelf," Scott Campbell, the service's director for operations and chief information officer, said. "Unless the president and Congress get together and say, 'Turn the machine on' ... we're still on the shelf."

The administration has for years forcefully opposed bringing back the draft, and the White House said Thursday that policy has not changed and no proposal to reinstate the draft is being considered.

The "readiness exercise" would test the system that randomly chooses draftees by birth date and its network of appeal boards that decide how to deal with conscientious objectors and others who want to delay reporting for duty, Campbell said.

The Selective Service will start planning for the 2009 tests next June or July,



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although budget cuts could force the agency to cancel them, Campbell said.

President Bush said this week he is considering sending more troops to Iraq and has asked Defense Secretary Robert Gates to look into **adding more troops** to the nearly 1.4 million uniformed personnel on active duty.

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, increasing the Army by 40,000 troops would cost as much as \$2.6 billion the first year and \$4 billion after that. Military officials have said the Army and Marine Corps want to add as many as 35,000 more troops.

Recruiting new forces and retaining current troops is more complicated because of the unpopular war in Iraq. In recent years, the Army has accepted recruits with lower aptitude test scores.

In remarks to reporters, Nicholson recalled his own experience as a company commander in an infantry unit that brought together soldiers of different backgrounds and education levels "in the common purpose of serving."

Rep. Charles Rangel, a New York Democrat, plans to introduce a bill next year to reinstate the draft. House Speaker-elect Nancy Pelosi has said such a proposal would not be high on the Democratic-led Congress' priority list.

Hearst Newspapers first reported the planned test for a story sent to its subscribers for weekend use.

The military drafted people during the Civil War and both world wars and between 1948 and 1973. Reincorporated in 1980, the Selective Service System maintains a registry of 18-year-old men, but call-ups have not occurred since the Vietnam War.

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One last comment from me--during that discussion with my students around Veteran's Day, the other common statement was that they would not go if drafted for the War in Iraq. Most of my students said that they would move to Canada or Mexico. If the draft is reinstated, which this test seems to be indicating, you are going to see a more divided country than the current red and blue America. Young and old, men and women, left and right...we will all be divided, violently, I'm sure.

Leave the draft alone. If you cannot get people to volunteer for your army, pull out of Iraq. Once Bush leaves office in '08, people will join again...people just don't want to go to Iraq. I don't...thank God I'm now 26.

Posted by wirefreee at 06:37 PM : Dec 22, 2006

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Hear they're going to "practice" on the republiKKKon party first. Many airlines are reporting heavy airline and train ticket purchases to Canada and Cuba.

Posted by valendug at 06:35 PM : Dec 22, 2006

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That's true wireferee. During Vietnam there were plenty of g*ay men in the military. Funny how when they really need to fill the ranks it's no big deal, but when they want to get a ll self-righteous then g*ay men need no longer apply.

Hypocrites.

Posted by RandaIDS at 06:35 PM : Dec 22, 2006

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This morning ncoldsens said that you would be able to get out of the draft by saying you're gay. As a gay man, I have a gut feeling that if the draft came back you would see "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" quickly disappear. *** would be the first people this president would want to go to fight in a deadly war like Iraq.

Posted by wireferee at 06:32 PM : Dec 22, 2006

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I say if they are going to reinstate the draft, then we include women in the draft. If women want to be equal in all ways, they should be included in the draft. As a teacher, we debated this in class, and my students were near unanimous in stating that women should be included.

I don't know if someone discussed this already, as I didn't read all four pages of comments. I apologize if it is redundant.

Posted by wireferee at 06:18 PM : Dec 22, 2006

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Our Country is Fascist and NOT a Democracy.

The bumper stickers should have read :

Support our WAR.

I don't know what Game they are playing telling us about this test.

Could they be getting ready to reinstate the Draft? Considering that our Government LIES to us constantly, I think they are reinstating the draft.

Posted by fascistusa at 06:00 PM : Dec 22, 2006

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I just retired with 38+ years in the military and would do it again if I could.

Posted by annd2302 at 05:44 PM : Dec 22, 2006

Welcome home bro.

Posted by RandaIDS at 05:51 PM : Dec 22, 2006

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sorry annd2302 the poll that I read earlier did not include ages

Posted by ncoldsens at 05:48 PM : Dec 22, 2006

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And I should have added are also typically some of the gutsiest motherf*uckers ever to put on a uniform.

Posted by RandaIDS at 05:46 PM : Dec 22, 2006

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Reinstate the Draft!!!!

I just read this in a message, "Polls show 7 out of 10 Americans oppose a reinstatement of the draft." (ncolsens) What were the age group of these 10?

I just retired with 38+ years in the military and would do it again if I could.

Posted by annd2302 at 05:44 PM : Dec 22, 2006

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