

Leveling the Killing Fields

Written by Alex Baer
Thursday, 23 August 2012 15:50

The only thing our political leaders have learned about war is not how to avoid them, but making certain they never again suffer a national conscription, or draft.

Vietnam taught politicians the PR challenges of holding a fine war with a draft in place: All of a sudden, *everyone and his brother* had some real skin in the game, with so broad a population base up for grabs as cannon fodder.

Today, politicians think nothing of narrowing their gun sights, and sharpening the burden to a fine point -- one supported by very few backs. With a more-or-less volunteer force, you just demand the same small group returns to the battlefield over and over and over -- while promising to look into the puzzling reasons soldier suicides have skyrocketed.

Smaller pools of people are easier to shout commands down to, plus, they create much lighter blowback coming back upstream to the top: in terms of war, a win-win.

This is precisely the point, for politicians: You don't want the people getting a say in the decision, gumming up the works -- and you surely don't need a million parents shredding the seat of your pants over their Johnnies and Janies.

But, in theory, the draft accomplished what everyone in America says they've always wanted for Christmas: a level playing field. This meant *anyone* could be scooped up for military service and find themselves in the midst of a shooting war, suddenly sharing the burden of the nation.

In real life, of course, some of those killing fields have to be more level for some than for others. This is why there was always such a gold rush on for draft deferments by the Romneys and the Cheneys of this un-level world.

Rabid war-monger Dick Cheney had *five* deferments sidestepping his own immersion into the war in Vietnam -- four as a student, one as a new dad. Willard Romney had *four*

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deferments, all so he could proselytize in France about a system of beliefs involving his god on Planet Kolob, and so on -- even though Mormons were concerned about continual overuse of their deferments as so many in their ranks required *missionary time*.

It's no surprise that so many sabre-rattlers are chickenhawks -- all squawk, no beak or claw. When it comes to obsessive gun nuts who love promoting a warlike America, Ted Nugent leaps to mind. He *still* brags that he lived in his unchanged pants for a month, and kept defecating in them the whole time, in order to flunk his physical exam, thereby chickenhawk-ing himself out of harm's way in Vietnam.

There's plenty of company: Newt Gingrich (deferments); Jack Kemp (knee injury -- although he soldiered on as an NFL quarterback for 8 more years); Pat Buchanan (arthritis in his knees -- although he later on became a devout jogger), and so on.

Of course, one fat, tempting target always pops up in this Hall of Shame list: double-talking blowhard Rush Limbaugh, and his famous anal cyst, who chickenhawked his own way past the draft board via a note slipped to them by his private doctor -- ironically fitting, for such a mammoth pain in the American arse.

And, when deferments run thin, there's always the Dubya Route: stateside assignment to a champagne unit whose primary mission may be justifying comfy slots for the privileged few.

All these fiercely patriotic Americans, always so ready to take the country headlong into perpetual war -- so long as there's no risk of any of *them* having to stop any stray rounds with their big, puffed-up-proud, patriotic chests.

Even draft-free, some things never change. Just ask any of those who were military, in Vietnam -- any of our 153,303 wounded, or any of our 58,209 dead.

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Under a draft, it is difficult to imagine Americans would have allowed a war in Iraq or Afghanistan. All those rushed lies would have been examined much more closely, parents insisting the case be truly and tightly made, before surrendering their sons and daughters to war.

Our continuing lack of a draft says that we prefer the world as it is today -- one that lets the heavy burden and stink of war sink and linger on very few of us. Our silence says that burden and stink is perfectly OK for more than a decade, and without a break, too.

With a draft, so many young people's butts are on the line. With a draft, would we be hearing the old, fanatical fervor cranking up, to spill and spread the carnage outward again, this time into Iran?

Maintaining a draft at least maintains the threat of some senators' sons' butts being represented on the front lines. If nothing else, a draft forces politicians to work harder to squirm their offspring to the sidelines or choose war as an easy option.

A draft forces politicians to work their shoulders hard against that level playing field they always say they want for the rest of us.

Lots of info is available: Search any prominent man now 55 to 75, using his name and "draft deferments." *Caution:* □ *This approach may yield sudden insights.*

But, for Rush -- that great hate-speaking, racist, sexist, all-American entertainer, we'll make it quite easy to *read all about it*:

<http://www.snopes.com/military/limbaugh.asp>

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