



The Coming Draft: The Crisis in Our Military and Why Selective Service Is Wrong for America

Philip Gold

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A frustrating war and an endless occupation. The very real prospect of more conflict overseas. A military stretched beyond its breaking point. The stage is set for the resumption of the draft. Now, in an explosive and provocative book, Philip Gold, a former Marine and a disaffected conservative, reveals why selective service should never come to pass—but might.

In *The Coming Draft*, Gold charts the path that brought us to this treacherous point and posits an “exit strategy” for America to change its course. In candid language and through authoritative research, he uncovers the flaws of forced enlistment from ancient to recent times and suggests serious and more effective methods to protect the homeland.

“Plans/reality mismatch” is how Gold describes the Bush administration’s handling of the Iraq war. This conflict’s deadly, years-long duration—with overtaxed volunteer troops—has led to the Marines missing their monthly recruitment quotas by up to 25 percent, soldiers over sixty being called out of retirement to serve, and in some cases National Guard tours being extended to 2031. Though the House of Representatives made a show of voting against the draft idea in 2004, Gold believes that a collusion of neoconservatives and liberals could eventually cause conscription to be reinstated. The neocon argument for the return of universal conscription rests in the expectation that American military presence will need to increase in order to combat the spreading threat of terrorism, while the left wing hopes that the revival of the draft will expand the scope of the debate about U.S. military policy, thereby making American involvement in wars an issue that potentially touches every household.

Asserting that selective service has been neither effective nor historically validated, *The Coming Draft* provides evidence that the Founding Fathers’ concept of common defense differed from our own and allowed for “proper refusal” in addition to service. More damning, Gold insists that starting with the Universal Militia Act of 1791, the draft has been rife with demoralizing corruption and bad faith, whether it was exceptions for civilian slave owners in the Civil War or loophole-laden systems from World War I to Vietnam.

Gold’s practical and innovative alternatives include the redefinition of service (to include earthquake and weather-related relief work), and a drastic rethinking of the duties of the National Guard. All this, he believes, must begin with setting limits on any president’s ability to launch an undeclared war.

Written with an acute awareness and fierce intelligence, *The Coming Draft* is an indispensable work for anyone who is, or who might have to be, a soldier—and any citizen concerned about the future of our country.

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