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Only The Guilty Go Quietly To The Gallows.

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PAMPHLETS FOR A BETTER HUMANKIND Addressing The Micro- And Macro-Problems Facing Humankind, And Providing Achievable Solutions; Going Where The Politically Correct Dare Not. (While the SOLUTION offered herein may not be a panacea, and may be provocative, it is offered as a positive step to correct the problem presented.)

STRENGTHENING THE MILITARY BY REDUCING PRISON OVERCROWDING

David Scott Harrison, (c) 2008

One-hundred-seventy-five-thousand men and women reside in California prisons designed and built to house ninety-thousand individuals. As a result of such overcrowding, California's prison system (California Department Of Corrections And Rehabilitation (CDC&R)) is collapsing under its own weight (taking California taxpayers down with it); a federal judge took control of medical care throughout the CDC&R after discovering that one prisoner per week dies as a direct result of lack of or negligent medical treatment; prisoners are double-bunking in cells built for single occupancy and are triple-stacked in gymnasiums, hallways, Day Rooms and converted television rooms; education and rehabilitation opportunities are minimal; prisoner on prisoner and prisoner on staff violence results in near permanent lock-downs at 70% of prisons; the annual budget for the CDC&R (at taxpayers' expense) touches ten-billion dollars, not counting the more than seven-and-one-half-billion dollars said federal judge is requiring to bring medical care up to constitutional standards, and another seven-point-four-billion dollars CDC&R lobbyists are pitching is needed for prison construction to ease overcrowding; and a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit Court Of Appeals is holding hearings on whether to take over complete control of the CDC&R. No one disputes that a solution to the overcrowding is desperately overdue.

At the same time that the CDC&R is breaking down, the United States military is facing serious problems of an antipodal nature. With the United States engaged in wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and occupations and policing in hundreds of hot-spots throughout the world, military forces are spread dangerously thin, and surely will be spread thinner in the foreseeable future. Presidential hopeful, Barrack Obama, has back-pedaled on Iraq (now non-committal on how long a time and how many troops will be needed to "win" that war) and has stated his intent to increase American troop presence in Afghanistan from 33,000 to, at least, 43,000. Presidential candidate, John McCain, argues for even greater United States presence, far beyond what Obama wants, in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and all around the world. There is, however, a dearth of willing and able service-minded men and women. Military recruiters have been exposed lying and threatening young Americans to coerce their enlistment and military service. Many servicemen and servicewomen are being forced to remain in the military past their contract terms by military brass who regularly enforce Stop Loss procedures. Stop Loss prohibits servicemen and servicewomen from leaving the military at the expiration of their contract terms, thus converting honorable military service in the name of liberty and justice for all into conscription and forced labor. The lack of men and women willing and able to serve in the military endangers the American way of life and her very survival. On the one hand, prisons are bursting at the seams, while on the other hand the military is precariously shorthanded.

THE SOLUTION: Offer convicted persons the option of serving their sentences either in prison or in military service to their country. The offer would be available to persons between the ages of, say, eighteen to forty, who meet all physical and psychological criteria of military service, and whose term of incarceration is between, for example, four and ten years (this would include prisoners already serving time and whose remaining time-to-serve falls within that range). Prisoners opting for military service would sign a contract agreeing to a flat twenty-five years in prison in addition to the original sentence if the prisoner absconds, refuses or otherwise fails to fulfill his/her military service. (NOTE: The program could even be expanded to include other service to the United States, Corps of Engineers, Red Cross, humanitarian projects, etc.). A person would be returned to prison upon any serious infraction, or dereliction, with the

time spent in military service not counting against his/her prior sentence nor his/her new flat twenty-five years term. While in military service, the person would earn wages, but one-half of such wages would go directly to pay court costs, fines, restitution and other costs resulting from his/her criminal conduct. The individual would receive the same benefits as those enlistees not under the program (e.g., non-prisoner enlistees). In other words, prisoners who opt for military service would not be treated differently than others in regards to wages, benefits, training, expectations, etc. Upon completion -- honorable discharge -- of military service the prisoner's criminal records would be expunged.

Accordingly, this win-win SOLUTION should be enacted into law without delay.

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