



WILLIAM & MARY

CHARTERED 1693

DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT

Dear Colleague,

You might be aware that several of us in the field of national security studies have put together a group of experts to examine the All Volunteer Force (AVF). After more than 15 years of war—a condition not envisioned by the Gates Commission in 1973—we believe the AVF is unfair, inefficient, and unsustainable. To begin to evaluate such issues, we held our first Symposium at Kansas University in April 2016 under the auspices of the Center for the Study of the U.S. Military located on the KU campus. This symposium started the conversation we wanted to have (<http://ipsr.ku.edu/military/avf>).

“We” are the All-Volunteer Force Forum (AVFF). At present, in addition to the undersigned, we are RADM Michael Baker, USN (Ret); Colonel Andrew Bacevich, USA (Ret); Gordon Adams, Professor Emeritus at American University; David Kennedy, Professor Emeritus at Stanford University; LtGen Richard Reynolds, USAF (Ret); Larry Korb, former assistant secretary of defense; and former NFL football great Rocky Bleier, as well as others.

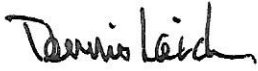
One of our principal guideposts has been General Laich’s book, *Skin in the Game: Poor Kids and Patriots*. It’s available on Amazon, but we will be pleased to mail you a copy free of charge if you will provide us the best mailing address.

We are well aware too that there are efforts ongoing to encourage greater national service. We applaud and encourage such efforts, particularly to help populate such outstanding programs as Teach For America and the Peace Corps. But we do not believe that any voluntary national service program can fill the ranks of the military with high-quality recruits at acceptable costs, monetary or societal. That said, as you will see from the attached draft agenda, we have ensured an excellent speaker to tell us about one particular national service initiative at our next Symposium, just as we did at the first Symposium in 2016.

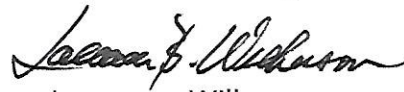
Our gravest immediate concern is that the nation will confront a war—a real war, not something like Iraq, or ISIS or *al-Qa’ida*—and we will be dangerously unprepared. History, indeed our own brief experience in that history, demonstrates that very large wars can erupt at any moment and, more frequently than not, are unexpected by many, particularly in democracies such as ours.

We now want to expand and deepen this discussion even further. In that regard, we invite you to attend and actively participate in our second All-Volunteer Force Symposium at the College of William and Mary on Thursday, 27 April, 2017. Whether you agree with our Forum’s presentation of the challenges or with those who are attending the Symposium to defend the

AVF, your input to the dialogue is welcome. This is a challenge that affects not only national security but also the moral fabric of our democracy. We welcome all views and ideas. A draft agenda is attached. As speakers change or are added, or as major developments occur, we will keep you informed. For now, we hope you will mark your calendars for the event.



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