President-elect Barack Obama has created several working groups to advise him, each exploring a particular issue as part of his Transition Team. You have been hired as a staff member for the Draft Working Group, which is dealing with the problem of whether the President-elect should recommend to Congress that a military-civilian service draft be established as part of the effort to encourage greater public involvement in solving the nation’s problems, and as part of strengthening the military once the Iraq War has been ended.

The chair of the Draft Working Group is Ben Arnold, V. He has given you the following assignment:

“The President-elect wants us to evaluate the Rangel bill as a way to decide whether a draft should be recommended by the new administration. As you may know, in January, 2007 Congressman Charles Rangel of New York re-introduced his bill entitled, a “Universal National Service Act.” The contents of the 2007 bill are identical to HR 163, which you have already received. Other staffers are working on arguments for retaining the All-Volunteer Force. Your assignment is to help develop an analysis of some aspects of the idea that Rangel proposed (and may propose again).

“I therefore want you to write and submit to me a five-page memo, using references to materials from your public policy course, in which you 1) make the strongest and most reasonable argument that you think can be made in favor of establishing a military draft together with a civilian national service draft, AND, 2) assuming that establishing a military/civilian service draft will be recommended, discuss EITHER: A) whether, and under what circumstances, conscientious objectors to war should receive exemptions from combat service and training, OR B) whether, and under what circumstances, college and university students should receive deferments on their obligation to do military or civilian service.

“About Part 1: Since civilian service and military service are included in the Rangel bill, I am asking you for an argument in favor of this combined national civilian service and military draft. In constructing this argument you may wish to briefly mention the weaknesses in the argument that you make, so that I will be able to gauge its true strength as an argument. But the emphasis of your response to Part 1 of the memo assignment must be on producing an argument in favor of national service and a military draft combined. In your answer to Part 1, do not discuss the issue of CO exemptions or of higher education student deferments. That you should save for Part 2.

“About Part 2): The Rangel bill contains provisions about conscientious objector exemptions and about higher education deferments. For whichever issue you decide to analyze, I am asking you to discuss whether the provisions in the Rangel bill are the best way to handle the issue, or whether it should be handled in a different way. If you recommend any change, let me know why.

“By separating Part 1, about whether the nation should have a combined military/civilian service draft, from Question 2, about what provision should be made for either CO’s or student deferments, your memo will help the working group decide whether to support the idea of establishing a national service draft, and what provisions to recommend on the subject of conscientious objector exemptions or higher education deferments as part of the general national draft recommendation.
“In constructing the argument in favor of adopting a universal service draft, and in analyzing the conscientious objector or higher education deferment issue, please pay attention to two things especially.

First, be sure that you refer explicitly to materials that have already been provided for your public policy class or that you may have discovered in your research. You may use footnotes or in-text parenthetical citations, but be consistent in whichever format you choose for references.

Second, try to include some discussion of at least one lesson that can be learned from the historical experience that the Nation has had with the draft in WWI or WWII or Vietnam.

The form of your memo should be:

To: Mr. Ben Arnold, Chair, Draft Working Group
From: (your name)
Re: Evaluation of Universal National Service and Military Draft and Provisions Concerning……[note here whether you have discussed conscientious objection or higher education deferments in response to Part 2]
Date: 11/18/08