

John Sengstacke to E.W. Kenworthy, March 25, 1949. Fahy Committee Members and Staff, Record Group 220: Records of the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services.

MARCH 25, 1949

WIRE (COLLECT)

C O N F I R M A T I O N

E. W. KENWORTHY  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON EQUALITY OF TREATMENT  
AND OPPORTUNITY IN THE ARMED SERVICES  
C/O OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

MESSAGE:

PURSUANT WIRE, ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOLLOW: (QUOTE)

GENERAL

1. IS THE FEAR THAT THE ELIMINATION OF SEGREGATED UNITS WOULD DEMORALIZE THE SERVICE PERSONNEL THE ONLY REASON FOR INSISTING UPON A SLOW CHANGE OF POLICY OR NO CHANGE AT ALL?
2. THE COMMITTEE IS CONCERNED WITH MORE THAN THE EXTENSION OF EQUALITY OF TREATMENT AND OPPORTUNITY TO NEGRO SERVICE PERSONNEL. IT IS CONCERNED ALSO WITH THE MISTREATMENT OF OTHER PERSONS BECAUSE OF RACE, RELIGION OR NATIONAL ORIGIN. TO WHAT EXTENT WOULD YOU SUGGEST THAT EQUALITY OF TREATMENT AND OPPORTUNITY IS NOT BEING EXTENDED TO JAPANESE, MEXICANS, JEWS AND CATHOLICS?
3. IT IS INSISTED THAT A GRADUAL PROCESS IN WHICH TIME IS ALL IMPORTANT IS THE PRACTICAL APPROACH TO THE PROBLEMS WITH WHICH THIS COMMITTEE IS CONCERNED. WOULD YOU GIVE THIS COMMITTEE SOME SUGGESTION AS TO WHAT YOU THINK THE PROGRAM FOR GRADUAL CHANGE SHOULD CONTAIN, AND WHAT RELATIVE PERIOD OF TIME YOU HAVE IN MIND?
4. IT IS INSISTED THAT BY LAW OR FIAT THIS SITUATION CAN NOT BE CORRECTED. WE INSIST THAT IT IS ENTIRELY UNNECESSARY TO AWAIT A CHANGE IN CERTAIN ATTITUDES, ESPECIALLY IN THE SOUTH, AND THAT WAITING FOR THAT CHANGE WILL ITSELF ALLOW THOSE ATTITUDES TO GROW AND BECOME STRONGER. WOULD YOU SUGGEST THAT A PRACTICAL PROGRAM OF CAREFUL PLANNING COULD OR COULD NOT BE EFFECTED IN A REASONABLE PERIOD OF TIME, SAY \*\*\* THREE TO FIVE YEARS?

ARMY (OFFICERS)

1. HAS ANY SPECIAL EFFORT BEEN MADE TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF NEGRO OFFICER TRAINEES SINCE THE GILLEM REPORT?
2. TO WHAT DEGREE HAVE YOU ACCOMPLISHED AN ELIMINATION OF SEGREGATION IN OFFICER AND SPECIALIST TRAINING SCHOOLS?

3. TO WHAT EXTENT AND WITH WHAT SPEED COULD EXCEPTIONAL NEGRO RESERVE OFFICERS IF RE-CALLED OR ENCOURAGED TO RE-ENLIST, BE TRAINED AND ADVANCED TO RANKS HIGHER THAN THAT OF CAPTAIN?



-2-

4. HAVE YOU HAD ANY EXPERIENCE WHATEVER WITH NEGRO OFFICERS SERVING OVER UNITS WHICH PREDOMINATELY WERE MADE UP OF WHITE ENLISTED PERSONNEL? IF SO, HAVE THERE BEEN ANY COMPLAINTS?

(ENLISTED)

5. HAS THE ARMY ANY COMPANIES IN WHICH THERE IS INTEGRATION DOWN TO THE PLATOON LEVEL? WHAT IS THE RECORD OF THE MORALE OF THESE COMPANIES?
6. IF YOU WERE CALLED UPON TO GET UNDER WAY A PROGRAM OF EXPERIMENTATION IN INTEGRATION, WOULD YOU SUGGEST THAT IT BE DEVELOPED FROM VOLUNTEER PERSONNEL OR THAT IT BE ARRANGED WITH NO UNNECESSARY EMPHASIS UPON WHAT WAS BEING DONE?
7. IF YOU WERE CALLED UPON TO GET UNDER WAY A PROGRAM FOR COMPLETELY ELIMINATING SEGREGATED UNITS OVER A PERIOD OF TIME --- SAY --- 3 TO 5 YEARS, WOULD YOU SUGGEST THAT THE INTEGRATION BE STARTED ON THE RECRUITING AND TRAINING LEVEL, OR ON THE ASSIGNMENT OR DUTY LEVEL (AFTER YOU WILL HAVE HAD TIME TO WORK WITH THE MEN FIRST)?
8. (THIS HYPOTHETICAL MAY GIVE THE COMMITTEE SOME WORKING IDEA OF HOW SERIOUS YOUR PROBLEM MAY BE):

SUPPOSE YOU HAVE A TRAINING INSTALLATION MADE UP OF TEN COMPANIES, ONE OF WHICH IS COMPOSED ENTIRELY OF NEGROES, OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN.

IN PLANNING THE ELIMINATION OF THIS SEGREGATED UNIT, WOULD YOU (OFF-HAND) SUGGEST THAT IT BE DONE BY MAKING THE NEGRO COMPANY AN ELEVENTH OR OVER-COMPLEMENT COMPANY, CREATING A NEW TENTH COMPANY MADE UP OF 11% OF THE OTHER NINE UNITS, AND THEN REFILLING THE COMPLEMENTS OF THE 10 COMPANIES FROM THE EXCESS NEGRO COMPANY?

OR WOULD YOU SUGGEST THAT THERE BE MERELY A GRADUAL EXCHANGE OF PERSONNEL BETWEEN THE COMPANIES AS THEY STAND UNTIL THERE NO LONGER EXISTED A DISTINCTLY NEGRO COMPANY?

OR A THIRD ALTERNATIVE MIGHT BE TO LEAVE THE PLANS UP TO THE BASE COMMAND WITH SPECIAL STAFF AND ADVISORY ASSISTANCE.

9. IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT MUCH OF THE PRESENT PATTERN OF SEGREGATION IN THE ARMY RESTS ON CERTAIN AGE OLD TRADITIONS AND NOT UPON EXPRESSED ORDERS AND DETERMINATIONS OF THE ARMY COMMAND ITSELF. IS THIS TRUE? AND DO YOU ANTICIPATE THAT THIS COMMITTEE WILL HAVE DIFFICULTY DISCOVERING WHAT THOSE TRADITIONS ARE?

#### AIR FORCE

1. WE UNDERSTAND THAT SINCE THE AIR FORCE'S SEPARATION FROM THE ARMY, ITS



-3-

2. WOULD IT BE REASONABLE FOR THE AIR FORCE TO SAY THAT AS FAR AS IT IS CONCERNED THE GILLEM REPORT IS BEHIND TIMES, AND THAT IN THE AIR FORCE TRAINING AND ASSIGNMENT OF MEN WITHOUT REGARD TO RACE CAN MORE QUICKLY BE ACCOMPLISHED THAN IN THE GROUND ARMY? FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE AIR FORCE, YOU ARE DEALING WITH HIGHER CALIBRE INDIVIDUALS, BOTH WHITE AND NEGRO, THAN IS THE GROUND ARMY.
3. IN THE LAST FEW YEARS A GREAT NUMBER OF NEGRO YOUTH HAVE GONE IN FOR CIVILIAN TRAINING IN RADIO, RADAR, TELEVISION AND COMMUNICATIONS. HAS THE AIR FORCE FELT THIS INCREASE IN POTENTIAL NEGRO PERSONNEL?

#### NAVY

1. THE NAVY'S RECORD AS TO NEGRO OFFICERS HAS BEEN FAR WORSE THAN THAT OF THE ARMY. WHAT, IF ANYTHING, HAS BEEN DONE IN THE WAY OF A SPECIAL DRIVE OR PROGRAM TO INCREASE NEGRO NAVAL OFFICER PERSONNEL?
- 2/ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TOWARD TRAINING NEGROES FOR NAVY FLIERS?
3. HAS ANY SPECIAL RECRUITING CAMPAIGN, EITHER THROUGH THE REGULAR RECRUITING MACHINERY OR THROUGH SPECIALLY ASSIGNED RECRUITING OFFICERS TO LOCATE AND BRING INTO THE NAVY ANY OF THE MANY YOUNG NEGRO MEN WHO ARE QUITE CAPABLE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT OFFICER TRAINING ASSIGNMENTS?
4. (IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT IT IS BEST AND MOST DEMOCRATIC TO STRESS THE REQUIREMENTS ON THE MOST CAPABLE AMERICAN CITIZEN THAT THE NAVY CAN GET REGARDLESS OF THEIR COLOR. THIS IS SPLENDID FOR THE "FROM HERE-ON" PROGRAM, WHERE ALL OTHER FACTORS ARE EQUALIZED. BUT IT IS NOT SUFFICIENT IN CURING A DEFICIENCY IN THE PRESENT STATUS WHICH IS THE RESULT OF A HUNDRED YEARS OF DISCRIMINATION.)

DOES THE SECRETARY REALIZE THE DUAL ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM OF ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATION AND SEGREGATION; THAT OF COMPLETE FAIRNESS IN ALL FUTURE DEALINGS; AND THAT OF REDUCING THE SEVERE DIFFERENTIAL PRESENTLY EXISTING. HAS THE SERVICE BEEN CONCERNED WITH TACKLING THE PROBLEM FROM BOTH OF THESE ANGLES?

5. THE NAVY HAS SPECIAL RECRUITING PERSONNEL WHO ANNUALLY GO INTO TRADE AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS (INCLUDING LAW SCHOOLS FOR EXAMPLE) FOR THE PURPOSE OF INTERVIEWING SENIOR STUDENTS AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO ENLIST IN THE NAVY AS OFFICERS. HAVE ANY OF THESE AGENTS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO OUTSTANDING NEGRO SENIORS, OR GIVE SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE DESIRE OF THE NAVY TO INCREASE ITS NEGRO OFFICER PERSONNEL?

6. IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT STILL, MORE THAN 2/3RDS OF THE ENLISTED NAVY PERSONNEL ARE YET IN THE STEWARDS BRANCH. HAS ANY PROGRAM BEEN STARTED TO RE-TRAIN OR RE-ASSIGN ANY OF THESE MEN?

MARINES

1. HAS THE POLICY OF NOT ENLISTING NEGROES IN THE REGULAR MARINES BEEN CHANGED SINCE THE END OF THE WAR?



-4-

2. WITHIN THE LAST TWO YEARS, WHAT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE TOWARD USING NEGROES IN OTHER THAN THE STEWARD BRANCH OF THE MARINES?
3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY INTEGRATION WITHIN PLATOON UNITS OF THE MARINES, AS APART FROM ANY INTEGRATION OF NEGRO PLATOONS WITHIN MARINE COMPANIES?
4. HOW MANY NEGROES ARE OFFICERS IN THE MARINES? WHAT IS BEING DONE TO ELIMINATE THIS EMBARRASSING SITUATION?

(UNQUOTE)

WILL SEE YOU MONDAY MORNING 9:00 A.M.

SIGNED: JOHN H. SENGSTACKE  
PUBLISHER AND EDITOR

