

Memo for the President, September 26, 1949. Reports to the White House, Record Group 220: Records of the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services.

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26 September
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Memorandum for the President

On September 16, Mr. Dwight Palmer and I, representing the Committee, had a meeting with the Secretary of the Army and the Vice Chief of Staff, General Haislip, during which Mr. Gray informed us that the Army was prepared in substance to meet the recommendations of the President's Committee with respect to (1) opening up all Army job classifications (Military Occupational Specialties) to qualified men regardless of race; (2) abolishing the racial quotas for attendance in courses of study in Army Service Schools; (3) assigning graduates of the Army Schools so as to utilize the men without regard to race.

If the actual terms of the statement of this policy, which we have not yet seen in final form, are well designed to carry it out, as we know is intended, great progress will have been made.

There remains the problem of the over-all racial quota. The Army presently restricts Negro strength to 10 per cent of total Army strength. The Committee has contended that the quota system should be eliminated because its racial limitation is directed solely at Negroes and because it permits, when the quota is full, the re-enlistment of less qualified Negroes and denies initial enlistment to the better qualified Negro.

In an attempt to abolish the racial quota and at the same time to control the numbers, both white and Negro, of low intelligence men, the Committee proposed that the Army establish a system whereby the number of men in the lowest intelligence brackets would be limited to the normal percentage in these brackets as revealed by World War II experience. The Army believes that, under this system, it will still get a much larger percentage of Negroes than the present 10 per cent. It also believes that it would have to cut out of the present Army large numbers of low-score men whom it could not replace with high-score enlistees.



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On September 16, we and the Army agreed to try to work out the quota problem together. Meanwhile, the Army will not reject the Committee's proposal but will state to Secretary Johnson that the problem of the quota is under further consideration with the President's Committee.

It is the Committee's expectation that it will be able within a few weeks to make a formal report as to the situation with the Army. The progress indicated above is encouraging. We will, however, want to review the manner in which the Army proposes to state its policy in its forthcoming memorandum to Secretary Johnson.

Respectfully yours,

Charles Fahy
Chairman
For the Committee

The President
The White House



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