

KENNEDY'S ANALYSIS  
OF ARMY'S PROPOSALS  
THIS WAS SHOWN TO  
THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON EQUALITY  
OF TREATMENT AND OPPORTUNITY  
IN THE ARMED SERVICES

FAHY AND WAS BASIS  
OF DRAFT ANALYSIS  
SENT TO COMMITTEE

6 July 1949



MEMORANDUM FOR THE FAHY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: "Outline Plan for Utilization of Negro Manpower to Provide Further Equality of Opportunity" -- The Army's Third Reply

General Comment

In its draft recommendations for the Army, the Committee sought two objectives:

1. The assignment of men to Army schools solely on the basis of qualification; and the utilization of school-trained men to meet the Army's needs without regard to racial units.
2. The abolition of the 10 percent Negro quota.

The Committee believed it was impossible to reconcile the maintenance of the quota system and the denial of equal opportunity in Army schools with the President's Executive Order and Secretary Johnson's policy statement of April 6.

But the Committee was not only concerned with the lack of equal opportunity; it was equally concerned with the effect of the Army's racial policies on Army efficiency. Consequently, in its recommendations the Committee aimed at correcting the present inequality while increasing the efficiency of the Army's utilization of manpower.

In its third reply, handed to Mr. Fahy and Mr. Palmer on July 5, the Army has not fully responded to either of the recommendations of the Committee. It has not only reaffirmed its adherence to the quota system and the racial unit as fixed policy; it has proposed a program which in effect would harden and extend this policy. Therefore, the program outlined is inconsistent with the policy of the President and the Secretary of Defense. It is in some ways retrogressive. While the Gillem Report did not propose intermediate objectives on the way to its ultimate goal of utilization of all men in a war emergency without regard to race, the plan which the Army has submitted to the Committee would take intermediate steps backward.

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Furthermore, the Army appears to have had the same disregard for efficiency as for equal opportunity. It is true that its plan would offer increased opportunities for Negroes within racial units, and to that degree the Army's efficiency, on the basis of its present racial structure, might be improved. But the Army, at a time when many of its technical MOS are far under strength, still refuses to use a qualified Negro technician where it needs him, unless it happens to need him in a Negro T/O&E or overhead unit.

Finally, its new plan for Negro utilization envisages preferential treatment for Negroes in several respects and thus discriminates against Whites. What the Committee has insisted on steadily is not preferential treatment, which may impair military efficiency, but equal treatment, which, it hopes, will increase military efficiency.

Detailed Comment

1. "Abolish the Negro quota for selection from replacement stream (training divisions) for school training . . . Henceforth selection will be made from the most qualified individuals without regard to race. The total number to be selected will depend upon military requirements."

The abolition of Negro quotas (in 80 percent of the courses open to the replacement stream the quota was nil) meets half the Committee's recommendation. The other half of the Committee's recommendation was that school-trained men be used as the Army needed them in their specialties, without regard to possible vacancies in racial or overhead units. Without the second half of the Committee's recommendation, the first half is powerless to effect the Committee's intent, which is to give equal opportunity in a truly competitive climate and thereby to insure the Army of the optimum use of manpower.

When the Army says it will select students from those most qualified, this must be understood in the light of its footnote on page 2; i.e., in the context of racial units. The Army means it will select the best qualified Whites and Negroes, depending upon the military requirements for White and Negro units. This is still a quota system, designed not to get the best qualified man for the job, but to get the best qualified White man for a job in a White unit, and the best qualified Negro for a job in a Negro unit. The desideratum is not a man's qualifications; but a man's qualifications plus color.

2. "Abolish Negro quotas to major commands for school selection of assigned personnel and prohibit major commands from imposing racial quotas in the distribution of their overall school quotas within their commands . . . Major commands will be required to sub-allot part of their overall quotas to T/O&E units, from which qualified individuals will be selected and trained to meet needs of the units and returned thereto. Major commands



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also will be required to sub-allot part of their overall quotas to overhead installations from which qualified individuals will be selected without regard to race. Upon completion of training these individuals will return to their respective overhead installation."

The proposed abolition of racial quotas for detached service students again meets half the Committee's recommendation. But the failure of the Army to propose that these men, upon completion of schooling, will be used without regard to vacancies in racial units, defeats the purpose of the Committee.

That this new policy for detached service students will not bring about the equality of opportunity which the Committee had in mind is immediately apparent from the instructions which will be issued to major commands.

If major commands are to sub-allot part of their over-all quotas to T/O&E units, they must do this for Negro and White T/O&E units. This means that there must in effect be a Negro and White quota depending on the replacement requirements of Negro and White T/O&E units. Thus it is not correct to say that this policy will abolish Negro quotas for school selection of assigned personnel.

Furthermore, the effect of this policy will depend largely on what T/O&E unit a man comes from, since the Army says he must be sent back to that unit after completion of school training. If a man is assigned to a T/O&E service unit which does not offer scope for his capabilities, he is foredoomed, according to this policy, to stay in that racial unit even though he may be qualified to advance beyond the limits of that T/O&E unit.

The requirement that students coming from overhead installations must return to that installation imposes the same restriction upon them. A Negro in an overhead installation may be capable of schooling which would fit him for a job not provided in his overhead unit. Nevertheless he is confined to the opportunities within that unit.

3. "Provide on a fixed plan basis, a suitable number of positions in each occupational career field for Negroes, which will improve the present numerical utilization in the MOS of each field. This will be revised from time to time based on experience. The foregoing will require inactivation of some presently organized Negro T/O&E units in order to release manpower spaces to the expanded fields, and the activation of some Negro T/O&E units to provide new positions."

It is obvious at first glance that this proposal grew out of the chart which Major Fowler made of the distribution of Negroes in the Army by MOS. Members will recall that this chart was shown and explained to the Committee by Major Fowler on April 26. The chart is reproduced in the testimony for that day between pages 44 and 45 of the volume numbered 255-6.

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Major Fowler's chart showed Negroes tended to be heavily concentrated in a few service MOS, such as laundry, truck driver, etc., and thinly represented in many technical MOS. It was part of Fowler's thesis that the Gillem Board policy of a 10 percent quota should be applicable within MOS, as well as in overall Army strength. Members will recall they did not at that time think much of this proposal on the ground that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to get 10 percent representation in the more technical MOS.

The above proposal of the Army does not advocate a 10 percent quota in all MOS. It does, however, suggest a levelling-off of MOS in which Negroes are heavily concentrated. In order to do this, the Army would have to deactivate some Negro T/O&E service units in order to release men for other newly created Negro T/O&E units which would contain new positions for the school-trained Negroes.

This proposal is revealing because (1) by implication it concedes that many MOS and school courses have been closed to Negroes, and (2) it shows the lengths to which the Army will go in order to keep inviolate the principle of segregation.

There are a great many things wrong with this proposal. In the first place, it sets up a quota system for career fields, something which did not before obtain, although many MOS within a field were possibly closed to Negroes.

Secondly, it makes numerical representation the criterion of equal opportunity. There is nothing wrong with the concentration of Negroes in a few service MOS, providing they are concentrated in those MOS because they are fitted only for that work. What is wrong is to have a Negro driving a truck when he could be used more efficiently as a teletype operator or a telephone line man. But it is just as wrong, and infinitely more destructive of Army efficiency, to rule arbitrarily that there should be a "suitable number of positions" for Negroes in each career field, and that to make these positions available, new Negro T/O&E units will be activated. What if the Army can't find qualified Negroes for these technical MOS to staff its new Negro T/O&E units? Is it then going to use second and third rate men, merely because it has created these Negro units and must fill the positions in the table of organization?

Here we have the Army proposing to risk military efficiency for an "equality of opportunity" that is factitious.

4. "Accelerate the present program for utilization of Negroes in overhead installation positions on a duty-interspersal basis with Whites. This will require assignment of additional qualified Negroes to each overhead installation and the displacement of a corresponding number of Whites."

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This proposal is significant for two things: (1) it tacitly admits that the Gillem Board recommendation calling upon individual commanders to use more Negroes in overhead units needs acceleration; (2) it proposes that the Army resort to a policy of discrimination against Whites in order to preserve a policy of discrimination against Negroes.

The object of this proposal is plain. If qualified Negroes are schooled in fulfillment of Proposal 1 above, then Negro T/O&E units may not be able to absorb all the trained Negroes. In order to keep these Negroes from being assigned to White T/O&E units, the Army must make room for them in overhead units. But to provide these additional spaces in overhead units, some Whites must be replaced. What happens to these displaced Whites if they can't be used in their specialty in regular T/O&E units is not made clear. What is clear is that this is preferential treatment for Negroes and discrimination against Whites.

5. "Administer the promotion system of the enlisted career guidance program on an equal merit basis so that all promotions will be obtained by open competition on Army-wide examinations, against a single standard, without regard to race."

This is either a shocking admission that the Army has not been administering the career guidance program according to its declared policy, or it is completely meaningless, for it is merely a paraphrase of the description of the career guidance plan as explained in Circular 1, issued on January 1, 1948. Circular 1 (page 2) states that it is the purpose of the career guidance plan to provide "a standardized system of personnel procedures for the determination of qualifications which will assure each individual an equitable opportunity to compete in a planned manner for advancement in skill and grade on the basis of merit."

It has always been the declared purpose of the career guidance program that it was objective and competitive.

Nevertheless, it has been understood that no matter how high a Negro scored in these world-wide examinations he was still restricted within his career field to Negro T/O&E or overhead units. The Army does not here propose to change this practice, despite the fact that it promises to promote without regard to race.

To promote only within the framework of racial units defeats in part the purpose for which the career guidance program was instituted, and is an example of how the Army's racial policy operates against efficient use of manpower.

6. "Initiate specialized enlistment programs for Negro personnel to assist in providing qualified Negroes for use in filling the expanded range of Negro positions to be created."

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The Army recruitment problem is quite different from the Navy's. Most Negroes are unaware that the Navy offers a career to Negroes apart from the stewards' branch. Therefore, a special information program may help to raise the number of Negroes in general service ratings, especially when it becomes generally known that the Negro in the Navy's general service is not segregated as he is in the Army. The Army's problem is not numbers of Negroes, but better qualified Negroes. The latter will be attracted to Army careers when they know they can compete and be assigned to jobs on an equal basis with Whites. That these skilled Negroes today are not attracted to Army careers today is apparent from a cursory glance at the "45" report.

7. "Convene a board of senior Army officers to re-examine and review the fundamental policies for the utilization of Negro manpower in the Army as set forth in the Gillem Board Report," etc.

Whether or not the Committee should lend its support to the creation of such a board is a policy decision for the Committee.

My personal view is that such a board can accomplish little while the General Staff remains unyielding on the quota and the assignment of school-trained Negroes. The original Gillem Board report was a document susceptible of pretty liberal interpretation, and it was so interpreted by Assistant Secretary McCloy and the civilians who worked on the problem during the war. It has not been interpreted with nearly the same liberality by the Army in the three years it has been in effect. The test of this is the widely varying degree with which Negroes have been used in mixed overhead units.

Implicit in the Army's suggestion, it seems to me, is the understanding that the Committee will withhold final recommendations pending action by the board. I do not see how the Committee can do this. While the Committee cannot well oppose the creation of a board, I think the Committee should make it clear to the Army immediately that it cannot wait upon board action and that it must make its recommendations to the President shortly.

A copy of these recommendations, I think, might be sent to Gray now, with the invitation to discuss them once more or to make formal reply to them.

Before the Committee goes to the White House, however, I think one more approach should be made to Secretary Johnson, since he is being given credit in the press for a determination to eliminate inequality in the armed services. I doubt whether Johnson will buy the board idea.

It seems to me the Army is taking advantage of the Committee's generosity. The Committee has asked that the successive deadlines for the Army's reply be moved forward in order that discussions might take place between the Committee and the civilian and military heads of the Army. Now suddenly the Army suggests that the problem, which was being discussed on what amounts to a cabinet level, be turned over to a board of Army officers for review. The



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plain intimation is that the Army can handle this matter unilaterally, without further interference from the President's Committee. If the President accepts the Committee's recommendations, he probably would not relish the formation of an Army board which conceivably could report unfavorably on the recommendations he has accepted.

8. "NOTE: This outline plan contemplates that Negro racial units will be retained and that the ratio of Negroes to Whites in the Army will be continued at the 10 percent figure established by the Gillem Board."

The Committee has not proposed an immediate and complete abandonment of racial units. It has taken the position that the Army should school all men on the basis of their qualifications, and that, having schooled them, it should not limit their usefulness to the Army and the country.

The Army has indicated it would be willing to give up the quota if it had some assurance there would not be, as a result, a Negro representation in the Army far above the civilian ratio. It is obviously impossible to predict with any accuracy what the percentage of Negroes would be if the quota system were abolished. The way out of this dilemma would seem to be a quota system based on GCT rather than color. If the Army set a quota for enlistments in Class IV based on the normal distribution curve, it could automatically control the number of low grade men it accepts. Since the heavy concentration of Negroes comes in Class IV, it could thereby have an almost sure guarantee that it would not get more than 10 percent of Negroes in the Army in the foreseeable future. This would not be racial discrimination, but a defensible procedure for keeping the Army from having a heavier percentage of Class IV men than there is in the population. The Committee might propose this to the Army.

Some such device the Army must find, since the quota is completely indefensible. At the present time the Army is spending millions annually for recruiting. For four months it has not accepted a Negro presenting himself for enlistment. It is open to doubt whether the Army can use the Negro taxpayer's money on a recruiting program and then refuse to let him enlist.



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