MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

SUBJECT: Evaluation by the President's Committee of the Army's "Negro Plan for Utilization of Negro Manpower to Provide Further Equality of Opportunity."

Detailed Comment

1. "Abolish the Negro quota for selection from replacement groups (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 be based upon military requirements."

The abolition of Negro quotas for Army Schools meets in part the Committee's recommendation on replacement stream students. Since 80 percent of Army Schools courses presently have no Negro quotas, this is a significant step forward. It is, however, largely nullified by the failure of the Army to meet the remainder of the Committee's recommendation - the utilization of school-trained men in their specialties without regard to race. Without the second portion of the Committee's recommendation, the first part will not effect the Committee's intention, which is that the Army make maximum use of its manpower by providing equal opportunity on a truly competitive basis.

The statement that henceforth students will be selected from the most qualified individuals must be understood in the context imposed by the footnote on page 2. That is, the Army will select the best qualified Negroes to get training for positions in Negro units, and the best qualified Whites to get training for positions in White units. The only exception will be the use of Negroes in overhead units.

Such an arrangement will not give the qualified Negro equal opportunity or enable the Army to make the most efficient use of its manpower. The Committee strongly feels that both parts of its original recommendation -
selection for school and assignment after school without regard to race are necessary to effect the President's Executive Order and Secretary Johnson's supporting Memorandum of April 6, the latter of which stated explicitly that "to meet the requirements of the Services for qualified individuals, all personnel will be considered on the basis of individual merit and ability," and that "qualified Negro personnel shall be assigned to fill any type of position vacancy in organizations or overseas installations without regard to race."  

2. "Abolish Negro quotas to major commands for school selection of assigned personnel and prohibit major commands from utilizing racial quotas in the distribution of their over-all school quotas within their commands. ... Major commands will be required to sub-total part of their over-all quotas to 70%E units, from which qualified individuals will be selected and trained to meet needs of the units and assigned personnel. Major commands also will be required to sub-total part of their over-all quotas to overseas installations from which qualified individuals will be selected without regard to race. Upon completion of training these individuals will return to their respective overseas installation."

The proposed abolition of racial school quotas for assigned personnel, like that for replacement stream personnel, casts only a portion of the Committee's recommendation for assigned personnel. By failing to provide that these men, upon completion of school, be used without regard to vacancies in racial units, the Army nullifies the value of its own proposal. For if major commands are to sub-total part of their over-all school quotas to 70%E units in order to meet the needs of the particular units from which men are selected and to which they return, this in effect continues the racial quotas which the Army says in the first sentence are to be abolished. The two provisions are contradictory as we interpret them. If our understanding is erroneous we should be glad to be advised.

Furthermore, the requirement that a man must return to his unit after schooling will greatly limit the effect of this policy. For example, if a man is assigned to a 70%E service unit which offers little scope for his capabilities, he will be restricted in the kind of schools he can attend by the needs of that unit. If he is not restricted and is returned after training to a unit which cannot use his training, this is a waste of schooling.

The requirement that students from overseas installations must return to these units impose similar restrictions. A man in an overseas installation may be capable of schooling which would fit him for a job not available in his overseas installation. Nevertheless he is confined to the opportunities within that unit.

It is the Committee's opinion that this proposal does not meet the intention of the President or the Secretary of Defense.
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 NSS of such fields. The existing all Negro institution of some manually organized Negro T/OS units is in order to raise manpower groups to the required levels, and the activation of some Negro T/OS units to provide new positions."

This proposal is an offshoot of a study by the Adjutant General's Office of the spread of Negroes in the NSS. This study showed that Negroes were thinly represented in many technical NSS and heavily concentrated in laundry, truck driver, bath, etc. The thesis of this study was that the OIL policy of a 10 percent quota should be applicable within the NSS, as well as in over-all Army strength. The Committee did not look on this thesis favorably when it was presented to them, first, because it was an extension of the quota system, second, because the Committee doubted whether it would be possible to get 10 percent qualified Negro representation in those technical NSS.

There is no suggestion here of a 10 percent quota in all NSS, but the Army does propose a levelling-off of NSS in which Negroes are heavily concentrated. In order to do this, the Army plans to deactivate some Negro T/OS units in order to release men for other newly-created Negro T/OS units which would contain new positions for the school-trained Negroes.

In the Committee's opinion there are several things wrong with this proposal. In the first place, it sets up a quota system for career fields. Secondly, it makes numbers the criterion of equal opportunity. There is nothing wrong about a heavy concentration of Negroes in laundry if in the natural order they are there by reason of their fitness for the work. It is wrong in some driving a truck if he has the capacity for being a typist operator. But it is equally wrong, and probably more destructive of army efficiency, to rule arbitrarily that there should be a "suitable number of positions in each occupational field for Negroes," and to activate new Negro T/OS units in order to provide spaces for those men. What if there are not sufficient qualified Negroes for those positions? Will the Army use second and third rate men in these jobs, merely because, having created the racial unit, it must staff it racially? To do this would be to invite a repetition of the Army's difficulties in finding during wartime sufficient, capable Negro officers to staff Negro units. The result is impaired efficiency and lowered morale which affect the fighting potential of the Army.

The Committee does not ask for a "suitable number of positions in each career field or NSS, but merely that the Army train according to its needs those qualified for training, and use them without regard to race. This modest proposal could be put into practice immediately, and thus..."
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meet the President’s injunction that equality of treatment be affected “as rapidly as possible” without impairing efficiency or morale. The Committee is convinced that its program would improve both morale and efficiency.

4. "Accelerate the present program for utilization of Negroes in overhead installations on a fair-interracial basis with White. This will require assistance of additional qualified Negroes to non-overhead installations and the displacement of a corresponding number of Whites."

This proposal would seem to involve discrimination against both Negroes and Whites. If qualified Negroes are scheduled in fulfillment of Number 1 above, then Negro 7/1008 units may not absorb all the trained Negroes. In order to prevent these men from being assigned as needed regardless of race, the Army proposes making room for them in overhead units. To provide the additional Negro space in overhead units, some Whites must be removed. What happens to these Whites if they can’t be used in their specialty within regular 7/1008 units is not clear. This preferential treatment for Negroes in overhead units would not be necessary if they were to be given equal treatment in assignments according to needs and qualifications.

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

The above is standard procedure which is already in effect, and is merely a paraphrase of Circular V, issued on January 1, 1948, explaining the career guidance program. Circular V (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."

Despite the above description, it has always 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 or overhead units. The Army does not propose to change this arrangement in the above recommendation, even though promotion within the present racial framework defeats in part the purpose of the career guidance program.
6. "Initiate specialized enlistment programs for Negro personnel to assist in providing qualified Negroes for use in filling the estimated number of Negro positions to be created."

The Committee sees no objection, but points out that the most effective inducement which could be offered to better qualified Negroes would be a change in policy that would allow these Negroes to compete with Whites on an equal basis. The quota system operates against the enlistment of qualified Negroes who will not meet the standards for quotas to be opened. The restriction of opportunity to racial units also discourages the better qualified Negro.

7. "Delegate a board of senior Army officers to review and recommend the fundamental policies for the utilization of Negro personnel in the Army as set forth in the Allen Board Report, in the light of changing conditions and experience in the Army since the formulation of these policies."

The Committee makes no comment as to the formation of such a board. If formed, however, the Committee cannot look to it as a substitute for its own responsibility or defer to it in making its present recommendations of steps which should now be taken in carrying forward a policy of equality of treatment and opportunity.

8. "NOTE: This outline contemplated that Negro racial units will be retained and that the ratio of Negro to White in the Army will be maintained at the 10 percent figure established by the Allen Board."

The Committee has not proposed the immediate and complete abandonment of all racial units. It has recommended that qualified Negroes shall be sent to school and assigned where they are needed and qualified without regard to race. This will gradually bring about in Army units some extension of the integration now existing in overseas installations and Army Schools for enlisted men as well as officers. The Committee cannot recommend less than this in the light of the policy enunciated by the President and supported by the Secretary of Defense.

As far as the racial quota, the Department of the Army has stated it would be willing to abolish the quota if all the services used the same entry score. The Committee has recommended that there be parity of mental standards for enlistment in all three services and that the Navy and Air Force should accept less score personal according to their ability to use them; provided, that final decision on this recommendation may await completion of the projected job analysis by the National Military Establishment.

The Committee recommends that for voluntary enlistment a quota system based on the General Classification Test be substituted for the racial quota system. A system based on GCT would at once insure the Army of
not getting too many low score recruits, since a large number of unqualified personnel would be eliminated by such a procedure.

Such a system would be determined by ascertaining the existing GAT distribution in relation to the normal distribution in the Army as revealed by the operation of Selective Service during the war.

In order to control the number in GAT Grade IV, reenlistment of men in this category would have to be controlled. Therefore the Committee would suggest that:

a. A man in GAT Grade IV, completing his first term of enlistment and scoring below 80 in Aptitude Area I test, be not allowed to reenlist.

b. A man with more than one term of enlistment who is in GAT Grade IV and scoring below 80 in Aptitude Area I test, be not allowed to reenlist except upon waiver by the Adjutant General in the interest of Army efficiency.

There is good precedent for such a policy in the Allen Board Report, which criticized the Army practice of reenlisting low score men for repeated terms.

Charles Faby, Chairman
For the Committee

cc: The White House
The Secretary of Defense

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