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THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON EQUALITY
OF TREATMENT AND OPPORTUNITY
IN THE ARMED SERVICES

ENCLOSURE B

25 July 1949



MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

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

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 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 quota, 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 -

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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 overhead installations without regard to race."

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 over-all school quotas within their commands Major commands will be required to sub-allot part of their over-all 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 also will be required to sub-allot part of their over-all 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 school quotas for assigned personnel, like that for replacement stream personnel, meets only a portion of the Committee's recommendation for assigned personnel. By failing to propose 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-allot part of their over-all school quotas to T/O&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 T/O&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 overhead installations must return to these units imposes similar restrictions. A man in an overhead installation may be capable of schooling which would fit him for a job not available in his overhead 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.

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3. "Provide on a fixed planned 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 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."

This proposal is an off-shoot of a study by the Adjutant General's Office of the spread of Negroes in MOS. This study showed that Negroes were thinly represented in many technical MOS and heavily concentrated in laundry, truck driver, bath, etc. The thesis of this study was that the Gillem Board policy of a 10 percent quota should be applicable within MOS, 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, secondly, because the Committee doubted whether it would be possible to get 10 percent qualified Negro representation in the more technical MOS.

There is no suggestion here of a 10 percent quota in all MOS, but the Army does propose a levelling-off of MOS in which Negroes are heavily concentrated. In order to do this, the Army plans 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.

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 course they are there by reason of their fitness for the work. What is wrong is to have a man driving a truck if he has the capacity for being a teletype 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/O&E units in order to provide spaces for these men. What if there are not sufficient qualified Negroes for these 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 difficulty 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 MOS, 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 effected "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 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."

This proposal would seem to involve discrimination against both Negroes and Whites. If qualified Negroes are schooled in fulfillment of Number 1 above, then Negro T/O&E 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 spaces in overhead units, some Whites must be removed. What happens to these Whites if they can't be used in their specialty within regular T/O&E 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. "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."

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



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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."

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 wait months for quotas to be opened. The restriction of opportunity to racial units also discourages the better qualified Negro.

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, in the light of changing conditions and experience in the Army since the formulation of those 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 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 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 overhead 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 for 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 low score personnel 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

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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 GCT 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 GCT Grade IV, reenlistment of men in this category would have to be controlled. Therefore the Committee would suggest that:

- a. A man in GCT 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 GCT 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 Gillem Board Report, which criticized the Army practice of reenlisting low score men for repeated terms.

Charles Fahy, Chairman
For the Committee

cc: The White House
The Secretary of Defense

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