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NOT SENT

THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON EQUALITY
OF TREATMENT AND OPPORTUNITY
IN THE ARMED SERVICES
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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OFFICE OF THE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

14 June 1949

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. FAHY

SUBJECT: The Noble Report

Here is a precis of the Noble Report with comments of my own added.

On April 15, 1948 Secretary Royall recommended to Forrestal that:

1. All services have the same standards for both enlistment and induction.
2. Personnel be allocated proportionately by mental classifications to each service.
3. Each service be required to use Negroes at 10 percent of its strength.
4. There be common recruiting and induction services.

When the Secretary of the Navy and Air Force agreed with these recommendations, Forrestal submitted the controversy to the Munitions Board for study and recommendation. On July 6 the Chairman of the Munitions Board recommended that when the three services had to depend upon inductees for their manpower, then there should be common physical and mental standards; and that there should be common induction stations. The Secretary of Defense accepted these recommendations.

As for the remaining questions, the Munitions Board was unable to get Army and Navy agreement, and the dispute went back to the Secretary of Defense. The issues at dispute boiled down to 3 questions:

1. Should there be parity of mental standards for enlistment.
2. How should inductees be distributed among the services.
3. How should Negro inductees be distributed.

These questions were considered first at a meeting of the four Secretaries on July 20, and subsequently by the subcommittee of the three services.

I. THE QUESTION OF PARITY OVERALL MENTAL STANDARDS FOR ENLISTEES

The Army argue that the Navy and Air Force, because they could get their required personnel through enlistment and because they were permitted to set higher enlistment qualifications, got the cream of the crop. The Navy and Air Force replied that they should not be obliged to lower their requirements when this was unnecessary to attract men. Moreover, they said that the present military force was essentially a training nucleus and therefore it should be of highest quality possible.

The Army also contended that parity of standards for enlistment would improve the Army position without greatly impairing that of the Navy and Air Force. To this Navy and Air Force objected. (Actually there is no substance to the argument of any of the services on the issue of improvement or impairment because no service had conducted a thorough job analysis to determine its real needs.)

The dispute on this issue was finally resolved by the Secretary of Defense who decided that there need not be parity of standards for the enlistment because during peacetime such parity would affect adversely the Navy and Air Force. At a time of total mobilization, however, when voluntary enlistment would be sustained, there should be common standards for all services except for certain specialist categories.

II. THE QUESTION OF ALLOCATION OF INDUCTEES

This problem would arise only when two of the three services found it necessary to resort to induction for its manpower.

The Army argument that the experience of World War II, when each service established its own standards or reputed selection of service personnel below those standards, resulted in confusion, bad morale and inefficiency. Therefore, the Army contended that inductees should be allocated to the three services in direct proportion to the number of men each service was authorized to accept. That is, if the overall authorizations were 50 percent for the Army and 28 percent for Navy and 22 percent for Air Force, then the Army should get 50 percent of Class A-1, B-1, C-1, etc. Navy should get 28 percent A-1, B-1, C-1, etc. through all twelve mental-physical categories.

The Navy and Air Force, on the other hand, argument should receive a preference share of the prior mental and physical categories on the following grounds:

1. The Navy and Air Force have more enlisted men in the higher pay class than the Army. This condition, said the Army and Navy reflected their needs.



2. The Navy and Air Force during the War attained higher proportion of GGT score personnel than the Army. This condition, said the Army and Navy, reflected their needs.

To these arguments the Army replied that the higher proportion of better paid men in the Navy and Air Force and the higher proportion of top GGT scores proved nothing about the Air Force and Navy needs but only that the Navy and Air Force had succeeded in getting for themselves more men with higher pay and higher intelligence than the Army.

The office of the Secretary of Defense and the Munitions Board agreed with the Army that the Navy-Air Force arguments were tendentious here.

3. The Navy and Air Force have a greater proportion of technicians as proved by the fact that they spend more on materiel than the Army. Therefore they have a proportion of higher GGT men.

The Army replied that this argument was nothing real without some valid and objective job analysis; that it was impossible to say that a Navy technician had to be brighter than an Army NCO who had to lead men in combat.

The office of the Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Munitions Board agreed with the Army here. The latter stating that without "common systems of job classification, job analysis and job evaluation" it was impossible to determine what the quota should be of high score or low score men for each service.

The Chairman of the Munitions Board recommended that there be a long-range project to determine what the actual needs of the services were, he noted that the Human Resources Committee of the Research and Development Board had recommended the expenditure of 1,370,000 dollars in fiscal 1950 to finance such a manpower study.

The dispute was resolved finally by the Secretary of Defense who said that at a time when all services were getting their men through Selective Service, inductees by various mental scores would be allocated to the three services in proportion to the allocation of total personnel. That is, the Army's position was accepted.

(This decision seems to me to be completely indefensible. The only way to allocate - by physical and mental qualifications - is to match them against the job they must perform. Presumably a study which is about to be launched will discredit this decision of Forrestal's, and at a time of complete mobilization the services will get men according to their needs.



III. THE QUESTION OF ALLOCATING NEGROES AMONG THE SERVICES.

The Army argue that all services should be required to "maintain" Negro strength at 10 percent of total authorized strength, whether by induction or enlistment. The Navy and Air Force replied that race should not

enter into the qualifications for military service.

The Army argued that the training of Negro troops require a proportionate number of trainers. The Navy replied that Whites and Negroes of the same test score required the same training.

The Army argued further that unless the other services accepted 10 percent Negroes, the Army would have to maintain the quota, or burden itself with a disproportionate number of Negroes. The Army added that the failure of the other services to have a 10 percent quota was "discrimination." The Navy and Air Force replied that quotas were "essence of discrimination, and at a time of voluntary service could be attacked as an incessive burden upon the Negro or as a deprivation of opportunity upon the Negro."

The office of the Secretary of Defense conceded that the Army had a special problem because of disparity in entrance standard of enlistment. Therefore the Secretary of Defense decided that during peacetime there were no overriding consideration which required all services to maintain a Negro strength of 10 percent and therefore that each service should not have to accept a Negro proportionate of Negroes. To protect Army, however, from getting a disproportionate number of Negroes, it should be permitted to maintain its quota policy.

However, when the Navy or Air Force resorted to induction, then they too should adopt the quota system and that the quota should be regarded as a ceiling, but no minimum ratio should be imposed upon any service.

(You will note that this whole discussion is on the basis of numbers and that nowhere is there any consideration of the use of qualified Negroes regardless of race. You will also note that there is no prediction here that an abandonment of the quota would - result of 30-40 percent Negroes in the Army. It is interesting to note that under the planning of that time for an Army of _____ men there were 3,900,000 in the pool available for enlistment or induction. Of this 3,300,000, some 12.5 percent of the pool, 4,022,500 were Negroes. The present Army is 6,077,000. If 40 percent of this number were Negroes as predicted in the reply to Secretary Johnson, then there would be 270,800 Negroes in the Army. It seems highly unlikely that there would be 270,800 Negroes volunteers for an Army of 6,077,000 when the total Negro segment of the manpower pool of 3,300,000 was only 412,500.