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

16 February  
1950

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE



I enclose a copy of a letter from Major General J. H. Burns, in charge of the Military Aid Program in the Department of Defense, to Deputy Undersecretary of State Dean Rusk. The background of this memorandum is this:

During the war there was a good deal of correspondence and conference on the stationing of Negro troops in various allied and neutral countries, and the final arrangement, I believe, was that where the United States had stationed troops through the invitation of foreign countries, Negro troops would be with U. S. forces. However, in those areas in which troops were stationed as a matter of security and through negotiation with the countries involved, the wishes of the individual government with respect to the stationing of Negro troops would be respected.

Since the war there has been some opposition, I understand, to the stationing of Negro troops in the countries and territories named in the enclosed memorandum. The policy of the State Department has been that, before Negro troops are sent to these areas, the acquiescence of the countries concerned should be obtained. The policy of the Department of Defense has been that, before sending Negro troops to these areas, it would confer with the Department of State.

This question has recently been reopened, partly as a result of questions directed to the Department of State and the Department of Defense, and partly as a result of the new integration policies of the three services. As you will note from the enclosed memorandum, the Defense Department is inclined to the view that inasmuch as there is now equality of treatment and opportunity within the armed services, Negro troops should be sent anywhere in the normal course of routine replacements.

As a matter of fact, as you see from the enclosed memorandum, there are already Negroes in the Naval forces presently in Greenland, Canada (including Newfoundland), Bermuda and the British possessions in the Caribbean. At present there are no American forces in Iceland.

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Negroes are presently stationed also in the United Kingdom with the Air Force bomber contingent there. These Negroes are sent on the regular 90-day tour of duty just as white airmen are.

I think it likely that this matter will shortly be ironed out so that there will be no discrepancy in the assignment of Negroes to overseas duty in these areas.



E. W. Kenworthy  
Executive Secretary

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