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14 March 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. FAHY

SUBJECT: Foreign Assignment of Negro Personnel

I enclose a memorandum to the three service secretaries from the Secretary of Defense, together with a memorandum from Dean Rusk of the State Department to General Burns, regarding the foreign assignment of Negro personnel.

I communicated with the Committee previously on this subject on February 16, at which time I enclosed a letter from General Burns to Deputy Under Secretary Rusk.

It appears from Johnson's memorandum that the Department of State and the Department of Defense have now ironed out "in principle" the question of the replacement or assignment of Negro personnel in foreign areas. However, the desires of "certain" foreign governments with respect to the assignment of Negro personnel are to be respected. At least the Department of State will discuss the matter with the foreign governments concerned before approving the assignment of Negroes to these areas by the services.

In my view this is a matter which should be handled by the State Department, and I don't think that we should get involved in it. Now that the services have a policy of equality of treatment and opportunity, consistency would seem to demand that Negroes be freely assigned to foreign stations in the course of normal replacements. On the other hand, these American troops are stationed on foreign soil through the permission of the governments concerned. Therefore, the wishes of those countries and areas, I should think, would have to be respected, and their approval would have to be solicited.

This is only my personal view. As a matter of fact, there actually are Negroes assigned to all of the areas in question, though they are all in the Naval service.

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I do not quite see why the Department of Defense asked for our comment unless it wishes to get approval and support for its policy. This is a matter which I think you ought to handle.



E. W. Kenworthy
Executive Secretary

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