

8 August 1945



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MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. John J. McCloy
Assistant Secretary of War
Room 4E-886
The Pentagon.

I recently talked with General Porter about the post war Negro plan study. I outlined to him the same objections we had discussed. He agreed that the study outlined should be re-examined and plans to call in General Osborn and Dr. Wright of the Historical Division, and others in the War Department for assistance in preparing additional materials. At his request and after an examination of all the available mobilization plans and studies about Negroes, I sent him the following memorandum:

1. Since the expansion that began in 1940, the Army has been constantly faced with pressures for a change of its Negro policies. In response to these and because of the large number of Negroes inducted as a result of the non-discriminatory proviso in the Selective Service Act of 1940, many changes have occurred. These changes have usually encountered stiff resistance in the Army. This was true of the officer candidate training program, the utilization and Negro pilots in the Army Air Forces, and the statements of non-discriminatory policies respecting the use of recreational facilities on posts, camps, and stations. Despite these changes, the basic policies of the Army have remained essentially unchanged during the war. Nevertheless, although there has been no basic change in policy, there is growing doubt among representative Army officers whether the Army is making the most efficient use of the 10-12% of available manpower represented by Negroes. It is widely recognized that in a future emergency, this 10-12% might represent the margin necessary for military success.

2. Prior to 1940 there had been several studies into the performance of Negro troops that served as basis for the several statements and policies governing the employment of Negro personnel in the Army. In these studies and mobilization plans, the following basic premises appear:

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(1) Negroes should be segregated into separate units (a) because of the statutes of the late 1860's authorizing the formation of four (4) Negro regiments, two (2) of Infantry and two (2) of Cavalry; (b) because "This policy has proven satisfactory over a long period of years." (AG 291.21)10-9-40) 16 Oct 40, Subject: War Department Policy in Regard to Negroes.); and (c) because any other policy would have social repercussions and the Army cannot "get ahead of" the country on this question.

(2) Negro soldiers are not adaptable to modern combat conditions because of certain racial characteristics. "As fighting troops the Negro must be rated as second class material; this is due primarily to his inferior intelligence and lack of mental and moral qualifications" (Commanding Officer, 367th Infantry in Memo, etc) "Negro Troops as combat troops under modern war conditions never rose to the standard of white units even when led by white officers." (MEMO for the Chief of Staff, G-3, 6541-Gen-527, 3 Dec 41.)

(3) Negro officers have failed because of their lack of character and the inherent distrust of Negroes for Negro leadership. "The regimental commander (i.e. of 368th Inf) showed that the principal cause of the failure was the inefficiency of colored officers..." (MEMO, Chief of Staff, G-3, 6541-Gen 527, 3 Dec 41.)

3. The general conclusion that has resulted from these studies has been that the Army should use Negro troops only in segregated units; that as few Negro organizations as possible should be established and that these should be non-combatant. The following consistently appeared in all plans prior to 1941; "The largest unit of any arm or service to be organized of Negro personnel is the regiment." (MEMO, Chief of Staff, G-3, 6541-527, Subject: Employment of Negro Manpower, 3 June 1940.)

4. The basic approach that had been evolved was that change should occur only in the face of pressures. That this was an officially approved course, was recognized in a study which candidly admitted that a reappraisal of policies was necessary as a result of "continuous and increasing political and racial pressure for higher command and greater representation of the Negro in combat organizations." (MEMO to Chief of Staff, Subject: Employment of Negro Manpower, 3 June 1940, G-3-6541-527.)

5. In my opinion, it is important that the current study avoid an unquestioning acceptance of the premises on which past policy was based and recognize that the nature of the racial problem before the Army has materially changed since 1940. These changes are due to the differences in attitudes of drafted Negroes and those who have repeatedly volunteered for service



in the old regular Army; the advances in the level in Negro education since the last war when most of the present policies were determined; and the more vocal and organized opposition of Negro and liberal groups towards the War Department Negro policies. It is a safe assumption that Negroes will be included in relatively large numbers in the post war Army, whatever final type of organization is decided upon. In view of this, the current study should determine whether and to what extent the basic attitudes developed in the preceding studies and the policies resulting therefrom should be altered.

6. In connection with the consideration of necessary changes, I suggest an examination into the following:

(a) Inquire into the present policy of segregation. This is the basic problem before the War Department. As indicated above all of the preceding studies have proceeded on the assumption that segregation is necessary. Experiences during this war in Army hospitals and Officer Candidate Schools and with the integrated Negro platoons in Europe certainly raise questions about the continuance of this policy which should be inquired into. These experiences are perhaps, too selective to afford clear answers, but, being the only Army experiences with non-segregation they should not be ignored. On the other hand, reports of the performance of large segregated organizations like the 92nd Division should also be carefully examined. Attention should be given in this connection to the effect of placing together in one organization large numbers of men whose AGCT scores are low.

The latest available Army wide AGCT scores of whites and Negroes show the following percentage distribution:

	<u>Whites</u>	<u>Negroes</u>
I.	6.6	I. .03
II.	29.1	II. 3.4
III.	32.6	III. 12.7
IV.	25.8	IV. 45.6
V.	5.9	V. 38.0

Following normal assignment methods, it is apparent that a minimum of 83% of men in classes IV and V will be concentrated in any segregated Negro combatant unit. Certainly the effects of such a concentration should be carefully considered along with reports of performance.

In examining the effects of the policy of segregation it is not enough to compare reports of the performance of Negro troops with those of whites. The reports must also be examined

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with the point of view of determining whether the performance of Negro troops would be improved or impaired by changing the policy of segregation. Every possible precaution must be utilized to avoid the error common to all previous studies of this problem, namely, that of ascribing failures of Negroes to racial characteristics without considering the possibilities that such failings as occur may be due to lack of educational, social and economic advantages which would affect other personnel in the same way under similar conditions, or the possibility that these failures may be due to defects in Army policy.

(b) Investigate the Navy's experience with its recently announced policy of integrating Negroes into all branches of the service on the basis of ability alone. It would be pertinent in this connection to inquire why this course is being pursued by the Navy, as well as how it is working. The Navy's decision in this connection represents a more profound change than any that has been adopted by the Army, since it involves a clean break with prior Naval policy and experience. Recently at a press conference in the office of the Secretary of Navy, a special assistant who had made a tour of Naval installations was quoted by the press as having said "the Navy is so far ahead of the Army in its Negro policies that it isn't even funny."

(c) Collect all available evidence. In this process it should be constantly kept in mind that the Army's experience outside the area of existing segregation has been limited and that therefore, the reports of the performance of Negro units will necessarily reflect judgment on the performance of Negro troops under the existing segregation policy. Only in very rare instances will those submitting reports be able to indicate the level which could have been achieved by the same troops had they been used as a small integrated minority in mixed units. This condition will not necessarily reflect a bias or prejudice on the part of those submitting reports. It would be difficult for anyone to conjecture about a condition so foreign to actual experience.

(d) Consider necessary policy changes on a long term basis. It has been often stated that the Army is considerably ahead of the majority of most parts of the country in its handling of Negroes. Unfortunately, this statement is often used as an excuse for not changing policies. Future policy should be predicated on an assumption that civilian attitudes will not remain static. The basic policy of the Army should, therefore, not itself be static and restrictive, but should be so framed as to make further progress possible on a flexible basis and thus avoid the possibility of drastic changes imposed by legislation. This necessitates consideration of both short term and long term objectives.

7. The study of 23 May, in my opinion, and also that of responsible senior officers, see Tabs 1 and 2, should be rephrased in several important particulars because as it now stands it will not secure all the information necessary for those who will have the responsibility of making the final recommendations. In considering additional material, I suggest that the following objections to the present study be given attention:

a. None of the statements in the outline are so framed as to obtain worthwhile information on the issue of segregation. Specific inquiry in Officer Candidate Schools, hospitals, redistribution centers and mixed combat units should be made.

b. Many of the statements in the outline are leading in nature and should be rephrased.

c. The outline as now drawn does not request information about white troops who have operated in the same area under similar conditions as Negroes and hence there is a very real danger of the material about Negroes being distorted.

d. The present order restricting attitude studies prevents the securing of material that would be of greatest importance. For example, many statements have been made with respect to the distrust of Negro soldiers in Negro officers, and the racial attitudes of white officers towards Negro officers and enlisted men, and the racial attitudes of white enlisted men towards Negro officers and enlisted men. Certainly some of all of these matters are susceptible to inquiry in studies based on samples scientifically selected and evaluated.

8. In the memorandum to the Commanding Generals of the three major commands, it does not appear that the historical reports called for will be channelled through the Historical Division of the General Staff. This will result in needless duplication of effort since much of the material covered by the memorandum is either presently available or will be included in subsequent historical reports that will be sent to that Division. I, therefore, suggest that the Historical Division of the General Staff be assigned the responsibility of collecting, evaluating, and reporting on all of the historical materials used in connection with the study and that Division prepare and submit a report to the Special Planning Division.

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Civilian Aide to the Secretary

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