MEMORANDUM

April 7, 1947

TO: Mr. Robert K. Carr
FROM: Milton Stewart
SUBJECT: Conference with Marcus H. Ray,
Civilian Aide to the Secretary of War

I discussed with Mr. Ray the possible role which this committee could play to affect the status of minority groups in the armed forces. He expressed great hope that the committee would see fit to cover this area in its final report. He suggested that the appropriate witnesses would be the Secretaries of War and Navy, along with Secretary Patterson, we ought to hear General Paul (Gen Personnel) and Mr. Ray. Secretary Forrestal ought to be accompanied by General Paul's opposite number, the Rear Admiral who happens to be in charge of the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

Within the next year there will be a new opportunity to re-examine armed forces policy on minority groups. If Congress should pass the Army-Navy merger bill, the new Secretary of National Defense will have the problem of mediating the present Army and Navy policies.

The best solution for this would be for the adoption of the Navy policy with the Army's implementation. The Navy's position on this question, which I submitted to you several days ago, is an excellent one. It is carried out to some slight extent. The Army's policy, as reflected in the Gillem report, is very strong. It maintains segregation; it carries right out right down the line. Substantially, the difference is that on Navy posts in Washington Negro and white enlisted men serve together, share barracks and mess rooms, etc. In the Army they are generally segregated. At the same time, the Navy has one Negro commissioned officer, while the Army has none.

The worst offender of all is the Veterans Administration which does not even have any beautifully worded statement of policy, but which is frankly discriminatory in its provision of facilities. One problem which all of these agencies have is that the further away one gets from the office of the Department's Executive the worse the situation is.

The Army has done the best job of carrying through; the Navy...
has done the best job of urbanizing policy and has tried
ritually to enforce the policy on certain low levels; and
the Veterans Administration has done nothing at all.
Negro Veterans are placed in separate wards even where unnec-
necessary in Northern cities; they are isolated together
regardless of their disabilities instead of being put into
places where they can be treated with patients like them-
selves. The War Department, on the other hand, has maintained
non-segregated hospitals in which a broken leg is a broken
leg, whether it happens to be black or white.

The recruitment of Negroes in both the Army and the
Navy is limited on a quota basis. The Navy has a policy
(I am not sure whether it is written which states that no
more than ten per cent of the complement of any crew or
post shall be made up of Negroes. The Army has an over-all
policy of having no more than ten per cent of its total
personnel Negro. One control exercised by both services
is through the scores which recruits must make on general
classification tests. The Army now requires Negroes to
achieve scores of 90 if they are to serve in the ground
forces; whites must score 80 and 95 for the Air Forces. The
Navy has a straight requirement of 90. Day expects that by
July the Army will have changed its policies so that all
three services will have the same requirement.

One other important difference is that the Army has
adopted an educational policy to win tolerance for Negro
troops.

I suggest that the full committee might profitably
spend a day listening to Secretary Patterson, Secretary
Forrestal and General Bradley, with their respective aides.
We should then make use of the Kerner situation, which will
tightly coincide with our report, to cover the civil right
of all citizens to bear arms equally. Inasmuch as these are
also Federal agencies it might be advisable to invite the
Civil Service Commission to appear at the same time to report
on discrimination in the Government service.