

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

*Re: Stoppage of
Negro Enlistment*
July 26, 1946

MEMORANDUM

FOR: THE HONORABLE DAVID K. NILES

Major Mitchell of the General Staff came in this morning to say that General Eisenhower and the Secretary of War have each received a telegram from the United Negro and Allied Veterans, protesting stoppage of Negro enlistments. The Major wanted to know how we were going to respond to the attached telegrams. I told him that would be a matter which you would decide, and would be good enough to send us a copy of their reply when it goes out.

I have been closely in touch with the situation from the beginning. Stoppage of Negro enlistments is a very clumsy move, which is partly responsible for certain resistance to the report of the Gillam Board.

Of the 880,000 voluntary enlistments, 16 per cent have been Negroes and of these, 68 per cent have been Grade 5 men in the AGCT tests.

Marcus Ray produced very sensible solution to this problem, namely, that the Army should set up quotas for the various AGCT grades.

This proposal was rejected by the War Department, and then nothing was left except for the Department to stop Negro enlistments.

It appears that General Eisenhower is not too happy about this stoppage, and the War Department may "water down" its stoppage.

I suggested to Marcus Ray that he call you and come in and discuss the whole thing with you. You may not want to say anything one way or the other to Ray, but I feel we ought to show an interest in this matter to the Secretary. The War Department is, as usual, being clumsy about the race problem and it really is not necessary.


PHIL LEO NASH

*Noted
RKN*

Attachment



Dr. H.

The
Washington

WU B1 NL PD

CHICAGO ILL JUL 22 1946

JUL 23 12 23 AM 1946

THE PRESIDENT

THE WHITE HOUSE

THE UNITED NEGRO AND ALLIED VETERANS OF AMERICAN UNRESERVEDLY
CONDEMNNS ANY AND ALL QUOTA SYSTEMS USED BY THE WAR DEPARTMENT
IN RECRUITING OF ARMY PERSONNEL. THE QUOTA METHOD OF SELECTING
THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONS ARMED FORCES IS WITHOUT
JUSTIFICATION IN DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLE. TO LIMIT THE PERCENTAGE
OF NEGRO PERSONNEL IN THE ARMY IS TO DELIBERATELY DEPRIVE
CITIZENS OF THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO SERVE THEIR COUNTRY.
THE VETERANS OF THIS COUNTRY CANNOT CONDONE A POLICY THAT



WOULD RESTRICT NEGROES OR ANY OTHER MINORITY GROUP IN TERMS OF NATIONAL SERVICE. WORLD WAR TWO PROVED DECISIVELY THE EVIL OF RACIAL QUOTAS. CONTINUATION BY THE WAR DEPARTMENT OF ITS PAST POLICY OF SEGREGATING AND RESTRICTING NEGROES POINTS OUT THE TRAGIC FAILURE OF THE COUNTRY'S MILITARY LEADERSHIP TO LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE. EXPERIENCE SHOWED THAT THIS POLICY WAS WASTEFUL UNDEMOCRATIC AND DESTUCTIVE OF GOOD MORALE. THIS ORGANIZATION EQUALLY OPPOSES THE RECENT ORDER OF THE WAR DEPARTMENT TERMINATING THE ASSIGNMENT OF NEGRO PERSONNEL TO THE EUROPEAN THEATRE. WHEN THE ARMY CHOOSES TO DECIDE WHAT

KIND OF AMERICANS CAN SERVE IN ITS RANKS AND WHERE THEY CAN .
SERVE IT IS DANGEROUSLY ARROGATING PREROGATIVES THAT DO NOT
BELONG TO IT THE HALTING OF NEGRO ENLISTMENTS IS ANOTHER
DEMONSTRATION THAT THE WAR DEPARTMENT REFUSES TO CONSIDER
NEGRO CITIZENS ON THEIR INDIVIDUAL MERITS AND QUALIFICATIONS.

THIS PLAN OUGHT TO BE SCRAPPED BECAUSE IT IS UNQUESTIONABLE
DISCRIMINATION AND THE WAR WAS NOT FOUGHT TO MAINTAIN SUCH
PRACTICE UNAVA ASKS THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE TO RESCIND THE ORDER
STOPPING NEGRO ENLISTMENTS AND TO ASK THE WAR DEPARTMENT TO
ACCEPT CITIZENS INTO THE SERVICE REGARDLESS OF THEIR RACE

KENNETH C KENNEDY NATIONAL COMMANDER.

The Public News
Washington

WU B9 NL PD

JUL 23 12 35 AM 1946

CHICAGO ILL JUL 22 1946

THE PRESIDENT

THE WHITE HOUSE

WE CHALLENGE THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF THE ARMY'S POLICY OF
LIMITING NEGROES IN THE ARMY TO THE RATIO AT WHICH THEY OCCUR
IN THE CIVILIAN POPULATION. IT VIOLATES THE SECOND AMENDMENT
TO THE CONSTITUTION AND OFFENDS THE SPIRIT OF DEMOCRACY.
THE CRITERION FOR ACCEPTING A CITIZEN FOR ENLISTMENT IN THE
ARMY SHOULD BE HIS INDIVIDUAL QUALIFICATIONS AS A SOLDIER NOT
HIS RACE CREED OR COLOR. THIS ARMY ORDER IS UNADORNED

DISCRIMINATION. WE URGE YOU AS COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE
ARMY IN THE NAME OF JUSTICE UNDER THE BILL OF RIGHTS TO
REVOKE THIS UNDEMOCRATIC UNNECESSARY AND DISCRIMATORY ORDER
R LATIMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHICAGO CIVIL LIBERTY COMMITTEE.

C O P Y

WDCSA/2078
Carroll/jma P&A

file

WDCSA--080 The United Negro & Allied
Vets of Amer. (23 Jul 46) 27 July 1946

Dear Mr. Kennedy:

The Chief of Staff has received your recent telegram in which objections are raised to certain policies affecting the utilization of Negro personnel in the Army. This telegram is similar to one directed by you to the Secretary of War and to which the Assistant Secretary of War replied by letter dated 26 July 1946.

I am writing to advise you that the War Department's position in this matter is fully set forth in the Assistant Secretary of War's letter referred to above.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd) J. W. Bowen

J. W. BOWEN
Colonel, GSC
Secretary, General Staff

Mr. Kenneth C. Kennedy
National Commander, The United Negro
& Allied Veterans of America
Chicago, Illinois



WDGPA 080 United Negro Vets (22 Jul 46)

Jul 27 46

Mr. Kenneth C. Kennedy, National Commander
The United Negro & Allied Veterans of America
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Mr. Kennedy:

Your recent telegram to the Secretary of War, in which objections are raised to certain policies affecting the utilization of Negro personnel in the Army, has been referred to me for reply.

The War Department has given very careful consideration to the overall problem of the utilization of Negro manpower in the postwar Army. A special Board of Officers, headed by General Gillem, was appointed by the Secretary of War in October, 1945, and conducted an exhaustive study of this problem over a period of months. The recommendations of this Board were approved by the Secretary of War and made public through the press.

The steps recently taken to suspend the enlistment of Negroes in the Regular Army, except for certain specialists, and to suspend the enlistment of Negroes for service in the European Theater were necessary in the implementation of the policies adopted by the War Department as a result of the Gillem Board survey. We contemplate no change in our policy of utilizing Negroes to meet approximately ten percent of the overall manpower requirements of the Army, nor do we contemplate that any major changes will be made in other policies connected with the utilization of Negro manpower in the Army, until experience gained in carrying out the approved program indicates that such changes are warranted.

The Secretary of War appreciates having your views on this subject in which he has a continuing active interest. I inclose for your information a copy of War Department Circular Number 124, which was published as a result of the survey conducted by General Gillem's Board.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd) Howard C. Petersen

Howard C. Petersen
Assistant Secretary of War

Incl

