



The President issued the following statement to-day:

"I regret that the statement issued from the White House on October 9th, approving the War Department's policy concerning Negro Troops, has been widely misinterpreted and has therefore given justifiable offense to many Negroes who will serve in our armed forces. No one regrets this more than I, who, from personal observation in the last war, know how splendidly and valiantly the American Negroes fought for their Country.

The first misinterpretation was the insinuation that the statement had the approval of a group of Negro leaders who had conferred with me on September 27th. There was nothing in the statement to justify such an interpretation, nor was there any intention to convey any such idea. The statement intended to convey only the fact that in the formulation of the War Department's policy Negro leaders had been given an opportunity to be heard.

An examination of the statement will show clearly that there is no fixed policy of the War Department that Medical Officers and Chaplains will be the only Negro officers to serve in regular Army Combat Units. The statement definitely said only that the War Department 'does not contemplate' changing the personnel of the White Officers in the existing regular Army Combat Units where this policy has proven satisfactory. It did not state that it is the fixed policy of the War Department that future regular Army Combat Units, when created, shall not be officered by Negro Officers. That is a matter which has had and shall continue to have my most serious consideration as President and as Commander-in-Chief of the Army.

As to the policy of the War Department regarding the intermingling of White and Colored personnel, the thought in my mind, in approving the War Department's statement, was that in the present dangerous crisis, Negro Americans, as well as all other Americans, must make sacrifices to meet the emergency and that at this time and this time only, we dare not confuse the issue of prompt preparedness with a new social experiment however important and desirable it may be. This too is a matter which has had and shall continue to have my most serious consideration as President and Commander-in-Chief of the Army."

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