Memorandum for: David K. Niles  
Administrative Assistant to the President

From: The President

Attached is a memorandum left with me by the Negro Committee which was in to see me yesterday. I am sending it to you so you will be familiar with the conversation between us.

Encl.
In your message to Congress on March 17, 1947, your appeal for enactment of
Universal Military Training and for revival of Selective Service contained no
reference to military segregation and discrimination at the hands of men, despite
the recommendations of the President's Committee on Civil Rights.

Your Committee specifically recommended that there be no segregation or dis-

crimination in any executive draft and in the already existing military establish-
ment. It recommended legislation by Congress to that end.

While the Committee's comprehensive report was the basis for renewal of defer-
ences of all citizens at the time it was issued, we are now deeply disturbed by the recent
decisions of Secretary of the Army Kenneth O. Duvall to institute plans in the
National Guard, making an exception of "Negro" only because of its firm con-
stituitional prohibitions. A further cause of distress is the exclusion of Negroes
from the experimental U.S. camp at Fort Benning, Ga., which appears to fit into the
pattern of segregated units and Irene Butterfield, pointed out by the Secretary if
Congress should enact a permanent draft. The authority for this information comes
from Chairman J. J. Knaire of the House Armed Services Committee and is sub-
stantiated by the multiple reports that the Army engaged in anti-discrimination
measures from the U.S. bill as directed by the Office of Selective Service Board,
before the bill reached Congress.

In regard particularly to a revival of Selective Service, these veterans are
well qualified to insist upon broad, meaningful anti-discrimination and civil rights
enforcements for prospective enactors, the most anti-discrimination clause of
the 1940 Selective Service and Training Act were strictly observed by Selective
Service and the Army, and the violations were upheld by the courts.

We therefore urge upon you, as Commander-in-Chief, the following steps:

[Signature]
1. Insist, in a supplementary message to Congress, upon anti-segregation amendments and civil rights safeguards -- pertaining to travel by men in uniform on public carriers, to use of public facilities, to attacks by police, mob and vigilante groups as well as to the military training program itself -- in any WST and Selective Service legislation.

2. End immediately, by Executive Order, all racial discrimination and segregation in the already existing armed services.

3. Direct the Department of the Army to assign Negro enlistees, on an un segregated basis, to the experimental WST camp at Fort Knox, Ky.

4. Direct Secretary of the Army Royall to inform the governors of all states that the policy of discrimination in the National Guard will no longer be dictated by the federal government.

5. Use your administrative diligence to prevent a repetition of the wartime abuses, indignities and humiliations suffered by Negro soldiers, in the event that Congress should enact WST legislation or revive Selective Service.

Grant Reynolds, National Chairman
A. Philip Randolph, National Treasurer
Albert Black, Washington Chairman

Norma E. Boyé, Director, Non-Partisan Council on Public Affairs, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority

Joseph H. B. Evans, Former Executive Secretary, 17th Street Branche, Phi Alpha Delta, Washington

Charles H. Houston, Special Counsel, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

Narone C. Pollard, National Bar Association

William Worthy, Jr., Action Director, Congress of Racial Equality