

October 5, 1949



MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

As you know, the Secretary of Defense issued a statement last Friday approving an Army program to give greater assurance of equality of treatment and opportunity to all Army personnel without regard to race or color.

The proposed program embraces two recommendations made by the Fahy Committee; adds a number of points which the Committee feels are immaterial, but includes a statement with respect to the assignment of Negro personnel to duty, which Fahy strongly disapproves. The reason Fahy feels so strongly is that his Committee reached an agreement with the Army that assignment of qualified personnel to specialist occupations would be on the basis of merit and fitness without regard to race or color. Yet the Army's program is evasive on this point, which the Fahy Committee feels is the key to their entire objective.

The Committee feels so strongly about it, that a meeting is being held in New York Wednesday night. In all probability, a report will be submitted to you stating that the Committee regards the Army's program as unsatisfactory, because it fails to deal adequately with the question of assignment to duty, although it does regard the report as indicating that progress has been made. The Committee probably will not regard the program as final, and will want to continue its negotiations with the Department of Defense and the Army. The Committee will probably ask to come in to you for instructions as to the manner in which it should proceed.

Secretary Johnson's release, covering this program, is arousing a good deal of controversy, and has resulted in inquiries from a number of reporters, and letters and telegrams from interested organizations.

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You will very likely be asked about this matter at Press Conference on Thursday, and I would suggest a reply to the effect that Secretary Johnson's release is a progress report only; that it is not final; and that the Fahy Committee is studying the program and will make some recommendations in the near future.



DAVID K. NILES