MEMORANDUM TO HON. CLARK CLIFFORD
The White House

March 23, 1949

Attached is a copy of the statement I made to the
Faby Committee yesterday. While it does not have a classifi-
cation, I am trying to give it no large circulation as it
would be unwise to have it get to the press at this stage
of the Committee's deliberation.

[Signature]
Kenneth C. Royall
Secretary of the Army

[Redacted]
Enc. Copy #6
STATEMENT OF
HONORABLE KENNETH C. ROYALL,
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY,
BEFORE THE PRESENT COMMITTEE ON EQUALITY OF
TREATMENT AND OPPORTUNITY IN THE ARMED SERVICES,
MARCH 29, 1949.

It is my purpose today to discuss the Army's Negro problem fairly
and frankly -- to content myself with neither general nor ambiguous nor
face-saving language, to state the facts exactly as I believe them to be,
and to interpret Army policies exactly as I believe they will work in actual
practice. So far as I am concerned, the test is what has been done and
what will be done and not merely what is said.

At the outset I want to make it clear that in my opinion the
policies which should be applied to the use of all Army personnel, regard-
less of race, are those policies which best promote a sound national defense.
Our basic mission is to win battles and to establish an organization
capable of winning battles.

Specifically the Army is not an instrument for social evolution. It
is not the Army's job either to favor or to impede social doctrines, no
matter how progressive they may be -- it is not for us to lead or to lag
behind the civilian procession except to the extent that the national defense
is affected.

Applied to the question of segregation, the criterion must be what
produces the greatest and most effective use of all our manpower, including
Negro manpower, and what builds up the best morale and spirit throughout
the Army, so that we may place a winning Army on the battlefield. That
has been and will continue to be our aim.

It would be administratively easier from several standpoints if the
Army could totally abolish segregation between the races. The formation
of units would be somewhat simpler, and to a great extent the assignment
of troops would be facilitated. Furthermore, if the proven qualifications of
white and Negro troops for each branch of the service were the same,
integration might mean a more effective and more flexible utilization of all
the personnel of the Army.

However, there are other considerations. One of these is the
differing average qualifications of the troops of the two races for performing
specific duties. In the past -- for reasons that are perhaps at least semi-
political -- there has been a hesitancy to discuss this problem frankly. But
such hesitancy is not in my opinion conducive to reaching that solution
which is best for a sound national defense.

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The history of two wars has demonstrated that in general Negro troops, have been less qualified than white troops for the performance of certain types of military service, for example, service with the infantry or with other units requiring troops to "close with the enemy". The Gillman Board Report, and particularly its first edition, contained specific statements on this question, and the real opinion of many all combat officers supports these conclusions.

On the other hand, there are undoubtedly other functions for which Negro troops are exceptionally and peculiarly qualified. Motor or ship transport service might be given as examples. It follows that in the interest of efficient national defense certain types of units should be entirely or largely confined to white troops, and that where Negroes are assigned to any of these units, they should be carefully selected. The reverse should be the rule in other types of units.

Another -- and an important -- factor to be considered in the question of segregation in the morale of the troops as a whole -- their satisfaction with Army life, and the spirit with which they perform Army tasks. In war, when the chips are down, this morale factor may well be the difference between victory and defeat.

We must remember that soldiers are not mere bodies that can be moved and handled as trucks and guns. They are individuals who come from civilian life and often return there to. They are subject to all the emotions, prejudices, ideals, ambitions and inhibitions that encumber our civil population throughout the country.

Soldiers live and work closely together. They are not only on the same drill field but also in the same living and eating quarters. From the standpoint both of morale and of efficiency it is important in peace and in war that the barracks and the unit appear as so attractive to them that they will devote not only their duty time but a reasonable part of their optional time at the post -- that they will not be watching the clock for a chance to get away.

In war it is even more important that they have confidence both in their leaders and in the men that are to fight by their sides. Effective comradeship in battle calls for a warm and close personal relationship within a unit.

We must remember that in close personal relationships such as exist in an Army unit, voluntary segregation is normal in ordinary civilian relations. And this is true even in those locations where no type of segregation is required by law.

In this connection we must remember that a large part of the volunteers in the Army are Southerners -- usually a larger proportion than from any other part of the country. Whether properly or not, it is a well known fact that close personal association with Negroes is distasteful to a large percentage of Southern whites.

A total abandonment of -- or a substantial and prompt change in the Army's partial segregation policy would in my opinion adversely affect enlistments and reenlistments not only in the South but in many other parts of the country, probably making pointless collective service necessary, and a change in our policy would adversely affect the morale of many Southern soldiers and other soldiers now serving.
These considerations are even more compelling when the question of command arises. It is true that there are two or three instances of white officers serving under Negro officers. General H. C. Davis commanded the 4th Infantry Brigade with white officers in it. And I believe that two captains of the First Field Artillery Battalion at Fort Riley have had white officers under them.

But my understanding is that in those situations white soldiers were not serving directly under Negro officers or non-commissioned officers. And in my opinion -- and I believe in the opinion of a great majority of experienced Army men and officers -- it would be most difficult -- and contrary to the spirit of national defense -- to require any substantial proportion of white soldiers -- whether from the South or from other sections of the country -- to serve under Negro officers or particularly under Negro non-commissioned officers.

On the other side of the question the point to note is that the morale of the Negro soldier is adversely affected by the Army's partial segregation policy. Some have inferred that as a result of segregation the Negro is not treated equitably and justly and does not have the same opportunities for service and advancement as the white troops.

I do not believe that there is any real substance in this inference. It is in the interest of the Army -- and our regulations so provide -- that every soldier, regardless of race, should be provided the same physical facilities for work and for recreation, that he should live under the same standard of discipline and be subject to the same regulations, and that he should have the same opportunities for promotion and advancement and training -- in other words, that he should receive equal treatment in every way.

It is our purpose that the personal dignity of the Negro in the Army -- and all other attributes of an independent and co-equal soldier -- be fully protected. Where these requirements conflict with our partial segregation rules, equality of treatment prevails and segregation is not applied. This is the case with service and other schools and special training activities -- and it is true of club and recreational facilities -- where it would be impractical to provide separate and equal opportunities for the two races.

In my opinion the Army orders issued to carry out this policy have been exceptionally well obeyed. I have this not only upon my personal inspection during the past few years of practically every principal Army installation here and overseas, but also upon reports from time to time received of and made by Army and other commanders as to this feature of the Army program.

Of course, I do not mean that this -- or any other Army order -- is never violated. And I have personally heard that some charges of violation have been brought to my attention, and the small number of complaints -- and the smaller number of justified ones -- encourage me to believe that while the facilities and opportunities afforded the Negro in our Army -- and the treatment given him -- are as good as those of white soldiers.

I do recall one complaint that seemed to have some substance. It happened to relate to the Officers' Club at Fort Bragg, in my own State.
of North Carolina. I immediately leased a direct and peremptory order that Negro officers be unconditionally admitted to the Club, and the order was obeyed. Incidentally, on a recent trip to Fort Benning, Georgia, I found the Negro officers there members of the Post Officers’ Club.

Permit me to turn the question of the merits of the Negro soldier — and the prospects of Negro soldiers — as I think it to be at stake toward the Army. Unquestionably facts indicate that the Negro likes service in the Army equally as well as — and perhaps a little better than — the white men.

Even a cursory effort to create an anti-Negro sentiment among Negroes, like the so-called Civil Resistance campaign last spring, and to be abandoned as a failure, I believe that even a smaller proportion of Negroes resisted — and even a larger proportion of Negroes willingly and patriotically accepted induction — than was the case with white men.

The voluntary enlistment situation is even more illuminating.

During the knowledge that the Army has a partial segregation policy, a steadily increasing number of Negroes have enlisted in the Army, in-\n\n\nstantly more so than ever enlisted in the Army before — or for that matter in any other military service.

\n\nIn the last six months Negro enlistments have averaged 5.3% of all enlistments in the Army, 2.3% of these in the Air Force — and a similar percent in the Navy. Today the percentage of Negroes in the three Services are 10.3% for the Army, 2.7% for the Air Force, and 4.3% for the Navy.

While the requirements set by the Navy and the Air Force automatically reduce the number of volunteers accepted in these services, it is also true that the Army limits the number of Negro volunteers to approximately 10% of all enlistments; the proportion of Negroes in the colored population. All in all I am sure that there is no question but that in numbers and by percentage many more Negroes seek to enlist in the Army than in both other military services.

Incidentally, there has been some discussion of the Army’s quota on Negro enlistments. Over a period of time these quotas have worked both ways. You will probably recall that during the war there was a minimum quota of Negroes to be employed in colored positions in the Troops, and now the Army has a maximum quota on the number of Negroes which will be received by voluntary enlistment.

One of the prime reasons for this Army’s quota is the higher enlistment standards of the other services, which standards lead to reduce the number of Negroes that are accepted. This disproportionately increases the number of Negroes in the Army, making the problem of utilization -- as well as of segregation -- the more severe for the Army.

If the same enlistment criteria were actually applied, as well as accepted, for all three Services, the Army could go a long way toward restricting or possibly eliminating the quota provisions, in this connection, the Committee for perhaps noted that at my instance there was any prejudice from the Selective Service Act at 1946 all quotas and criteria by race.
Back to the question of the morale and satisfaction of the Negro soldier — perhaps the most conclusive evidence of how they feel about the Army is found in the recent figures on resettlement by Negroes who have already served. In number and in proportion these resettlement rates are breaking all records. They are proportionately higher this while resettlement rate is high. In resettlement centers, the Army is approximately 10% of the total resettlement rate of the entire Nation’s Military Establishment.

Resettlement figures are perhaps the best known index not only of morale but of general satisfaction with military service. And the Army is making more soldiers — white and black — than any military service of any nation that has ever entered in proportion. As to the Negro resettlement, I believe that the reasons for this satisfaction with the Army is due to the conscientious and successful effort to provide them with equality of treatment and opportunity.

As compared with this field record of the Regular Army, I would like to cite the recent experience of the New Jersey National Guard, which under the Constitution of that State has become a completely integrated organization, at that time Federally recognized.

There are approximately 3,000 members of the Jersey Guard, and despite the fact that there have been a completely integrated organization for more than a year, there are in the only 6 white enlisted men in predominantly Negro units and only 59 Negro enlisted men in predominantly white units. Neither race seems to “take to” the idea of integration.

But a more disturbing factor is developing in this unit to which only one explanation has so far been offered to me. In the last few months the National Guard of forty-seven States and the District of Columbia have increased in number, the average of such increase being 11.4%. But the New Jersey National Guard has decreased by 6%, the only decrease in the Nation.

Now, at the risk of some repetition I would like to outline to you some of the steps which the Army has taken in connection with the Negro over recent months — particularly over the period since I became Secretary of War in July 1947.

As you know, the final supplemental Gillem Board Report was filed in early 1948 and approved by my predecessor Judge Patterson. The principles of this report have been followed and in some extent extended under my administration of the Department, and I have taken certain other steps and have made certain other recommendations for the future.

It is recognized that the Negro soldier, enlisted man or officer, must improve his educational and other qualifications and develop his leadership qualities. The sooner this is done the more he will be able to contribute to national defense.

The development of the quality of leadership involves a program of giving the Negro soldier a little more responsibility than he would otherwise receive, in the belief that the probable result justifies the means. This Army policy is illustrated by the large proportion of Negro commissioned officers.

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Using the top four grades as an example, the Army has 8,983 Negroes, almost the same percentage as the number of all enlisted Negroes -- and this despite the lower educational and other qualifications of the Negro. I believe the Army percentage is far above the percentage of comparable Negro positions in any other Governmental Department. Certainly it is above my others as to which I have been able to obtain definite data.

As a matter of fact, the progress of the Negro in the Army -- and his present status -- is superior to that which he occupies in any other department of the Government, military or otherwise. Nowhere does the Negro hold as many positions of importance and responsibility.

A strong argument can be made to the effect that Negro leadership can best be developed in segregated units. Assuming, as we must, that in each particular integrated unit a Negro minority would be fairly treated, it is still certain that the disparities in education and experience would result in fewer Negro non-commissioned officers than there are today -- and, therefore, less opportunity to develop future Negro leaders in the Army.

We have also emphasized the importance of Negro officers and have pushed forward rapidly a program to increase the number. Today the Army has 1,204 Negro officers in the Army. On a proportional basis this is an increase of 0.8% in the last 18 months. This advance has exceeded my estimate during a like period since the Army first has as many as five or six Negro officers.

Today the Army has a larger percentage of Negro officers than it has ever had in war or in peace, during the entire history of the nation. It has twice as many Negro Regular Army officers as it had eighteen months ago, including four medical officers and two commissioned nurses. Negroes are serving in all ranks in the Army below that of General officer, and there are two Negroes assigned to the General Staff.

In order that this progress may continue, the number of Negro ROTC units has been increased from 9 to 15 and the enrollment in these units has reached a total of 3000. Also there are more Negro cadets in the United States Military Academy than ever before.

At the same time we have concentrated on improving the education of all enlisted, with particular emphasis upon the Negro enlistees. The famous Negro school of Ellington, Germany -- recently visited by me -- is a splendid example. We recognize that the progress of the Negro in the Army and elsewhere is largely dependent on education and training.

In connection with this educational program special attention has been given to the moral and physical health of the Negro in the Army. The record before of this health are the crime and venereal rates, which in the past have averaged several times the white rate -- sometimes up to 6 or 7 times and more.

Through determined efforts great progress has now been made in both fields. When I was in Germany last December I learned that the venereal crime incidents involving Negroes had fallen from 1-1/2 per thousand in January to 1/2 per thousand in November -- a decrease of more than 50%, bringing the rates temporarily below the white rate -- for perhaps the first time in any theater. Similarly the Negro venereal index

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In the entire Army has fallen from 642 in 1945 to 390 in January of this year, a decrease of 35%. Both Negro averages are still too high but we are moving forward.

In a further effort to develop the Negro soldier for efficient service in all fields, assignments of Negro enlisted men and officers have been made to every type and branch of service. A list of such assignments has been or will be furnished the Committee. In line with the Gillem Board Report we have since July, 1947, formed Negro battalions for service in white regiments, and in a few instances there are Negro companies in white battalions.

For example, Negro battalions have been organized in the 9th and 16th Infantry Regiments and in the 55th Alabama Regiment of the Famous 24th Division. There are also Negro units in the 1st Infantry Division, the 9th and 25th Infantry Divisions, the 18th Infantry Division, and the 2nd and 3rd Armored Divisions.

Both Negro and white companies are in the 324th Transportation Truck Battalion at Fort Bragg, Georgia, the 34th Truck Battalion at Fort Bliss, Texas, and the 19th Medical Battalion at Camp Campbell, Kentucky. We have not yet tried Negro platoons in white companies, but we have under consideration the possible use of such platoons during this Summer's maneuvers.

This is, briefly, the Army's program to date. We do not consider the program final. Army policies and their execution must be subject to such adjustments as may be necessary from time to time to meet changing conditions.

Personally I have looked into the racial question in every post that I have visited, seeking inquiry of white and Negro officers and enlisted men, both here and overseas. As a result I have reached certain tentative conclusions which, I must say in fairness, probably go somewhat beyond the views of the Staff, General Bradley and the rest of the Staff are entirely free to express their views to the Committee.

In the first place I am of the opinion that but for the serious question of command -- which I have previously discussed -- a white company might achieve 2/3 to 4/5 Negroes successfully after the first surprise is over. Study should be given to an experiment along these lines. At present the real problem in this connection is the Negro non-commissioned officer -- not the Negro officer, since at this time -- and as long as there is partial segregation -- every Negro officer can be assigned to all-Negro units.

The "social chief" problem will probably present increasing difficulties, as Negro units are placed in white division regiments and battalions. It is likely to be most serious -- and probably quite serious -- in isolated men's units, particularly in connection with cleaning. In the interest of both race and the problem which must be approached cautiously, and to a large extent on a voluntary basis. Even when so approached it is "dynamic", particularly with the Southern soldiers.

My investigation and consideration has impressed on me that our problem is a practical one which should be controlled by actual results.
rather than by theories or by prophecy as to what may happen.

Consequently I have suggested a voluntary experiment with a completely integrated unit.

The author of such an experiment was first suggested in January 1943 by General H. G. Davis, my Military Aide, on racial matters, who pointed out that this was a method followed in securing colored volunteers from service units in the ETO during the latter part of the recent war.

In suggesting a voluntary unit, I fully recognize -- as I am sure General Davis did -- that it will not be completely typical. But I believe that this preliminary step is necessary before we try a compulsory experiment. For obvious reasons my whole suggestion is predicated on a similar experiment by the other two Military Departments, and is dependent upon relative stable international conditions continuing.

The general problem we are trying to solve is a difficult one and I am sure there is no immediate panacea. I appreciate fully the desire of Negro leaders to achieve integration. I understand that segregation carries for them a connotation of inferiority of the minority group and of inferiority of the minority group -- a connotation which may be criticism of the country -- with a pride in their own race -- not disabuse.

I also realize that segregation lends itself readily to discrimination, and that many observant Negroes find it difficult to believe that discrimination and segregation are not always synonymous -- and are not convinced that there is possibility of greater discrimination against a small minority of Negroes in an integrated unit.

In conclusion, the Army believes that the steps that it has taken constitute the best practical method of handling -- not gradually removing -- the segregation problem. We believe that our progress has been sound, and that our accomplishments have been the result of careful planning which have enabled this division to the army's purpose and objectives -- or to the needs of any substantial segment of the men and officers.

I repeat that the Army is not an advocate or enemy of any broad social doctrine. I believe that its duty and responsibility is to provide its part of the national defense and that the effort it should apply relates entirely to the area of responsibility.

In my view here I have perhaps moved a little ahead of the views of those who are directly responsible for military results, but I have done so only after giving careful consideration to their views. I am reluctant -- and I am sure all those officials will be reluctant -- to force a pace faster than is consistent with the efficiency and morale of the Army -- or to follow a course inconsistent with the ability of the Army, in the event of war, to take the battlefield with reasonable assurance of success.

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END