MEMORANDUM TO HON. CLARK CLIFFORD
The White House

March 23, 1949

Attached is a copy of the statement I made to the
Fairy 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.

Kenneth O. Royall
Secretary of the Army

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STATEMENT OF
HONORABLE KENNETH C. ROYALL,
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY,
BEFORE THE PRECEDING COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL TREATMENT AND OPPORTUNITY IN THE ARMED SERVICES,
MARCH 20, 1946.

It is my purpose today to discuss the Army's Negro problem fairly and frankly -- to confine 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, regardless 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 foster 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 criteria 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.
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 "fight with the enemy". The Gillen 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 is 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 came from civilian life and often return there. 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 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 side. 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 sudden 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 permanent collective service necessary, and a change in our policy would adversely affect the morale of many Southern soldiers and other soldiers now serving.

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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 D. C. Davis commanded the 4th Infantry Brigade with white officers in it. And I believe that two captains of the 3rd Field Artillery Battalion at Fort Bragg 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 costly from the standpoint 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 policies. Some have inferred that as a result of segregation the Negro is not treated equitably and justly and does not have the same opportunity for service and advancement as do white troops.

I do not believe that there is any real substance in this inference. It is the intention 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 have the same standards of discipline and be subject to the same regulations, and that he should have the same opportunity 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 preserved. Where there are 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 been asked upon personal inspection during the past few years of practically every principal Army installation here and overseas, and also upon reports from time to time prescribed 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 being 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 equitably admitted to the Club, and the order was obeyed. Incidentally, on a recent trip to Fort Benning, Georgia, I found the Negro officers three members of the Post Officers' Club.

Perhaps the best answer to the question of the morals of the Negro soldiers -- and the prospect of Negro soldiers -- is found in their attitude toward the Army, inexpressible facts indicate that the Negro likes service in the Army equally as well as -- and perhaps a little better than -- the white men.

From a morale standpoint we create an anti-army sentiment among Negroes, like the so-called Civil Rights campaign last spring, and have contributed toward the Army, inexpressible facts indicate the Negro likes service in the Army equally as well as -- and perhaps a little better than -- the white men.

The voluntary enlistment situation is even more illuminating.

Despite the knowledge that the Army has a partial segregation policy, a steadily increasing number of Negroes have enlisted in the Army, inexpressibly more than ever enlisted in the Army before -- or for that matter in any other military service.

In the latest eight months, Negro enlistments have averaged 15,132 members of all enlistments in the Army, 6.3% of these in the Air Force -- and a similar percentage in the Navy. Today the percentages of Negroes in the three services are 10.3% for the Army, 2.7% for the Air Force, and 4.9% for the Navy.

While the requirements set by the Navy and the Air Force automatically reduce the number of members accepted in these services, it is clear that the Army limits the number of Negroes admitted to approximately 10% of all enlistments, the proportion of Negroes in the civilian population. All in all, I am sure that there is no question but that in numbers and by percentage 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 racial quotas have worked both ways. You will probably recall that during the war there was a maximum quota of Negroes that were accepted. This disproportionately increased the proportion of Negroes in the Army, making the problem of utilization -- as well as of segregation -- the more serious for the Army.

If the same enrollment criteria were actually applied, as well as accepted, for all three services, the Army would be left with a serious question of possible diluting the quota provision. In this connection, the Committee feels that perhaps not only at my instance there was a similarity from the Selective Service Act of 1940 all quotas and call by race.

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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 reenlistment by Negroes who have already served. In number and in proportion these reenlistments are breaking all records. They are proportionately higher than white reenlistments. And Negro reenlistments in the Army are approximately 16% of all Negro reenlistments in the entire National Military Establishment.

Reenlistment figures are perhaps the best known index not only of morale but of general satisfaction with military service. And the Army today is reenlisting more soldiers — white and negro — than any military service of any nation has ever enrolled in proportion. As to the Negro reenlistments, I believe that their proven satisfaction with the Army is due in considerable part to our conscientious and successful effort to provide them with equality of treatment and opportunity.

As compared with this fine 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 this time federally recognized.

There are approximately 1,000 members of the Jersey Guard, and despite the fact that it has been a completely integrated organization for more than a year, there are to date only 3 white enlisted men in predominantly Negro units and only 39 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 as to which only one explanation has so far been offered to me. In the last four months the New Jersey Guard of forty-seven states and the District of Columbia has increased in number, the average of each increase being 1/5. 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 1941.

As you know, the final supplemental Gillem Board Report was filed in early 1940 and approved by my predecessor Judge Patterson. The principles of this report have been followed and to 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 education 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 this belief that the probable result justifies the means. This Army tradition is illustrated by the large proportion of Negro non-commissioned officers.
Using the top four grades as an example, the Army has 5.03%
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 any 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
promotional status -- is superior to that which he occupies in any other
department of the Government, military or otherwise. Nowhere else does
the Negro hold so 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
such particular integrated units 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 1,284 Negro officers in the Army. On a proportional basis this is an
increase of 65% in the last 12 months. This advance has occurred very
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 13 and the enrollment in these units
has reached a total of 3,000. 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 enlisted. The famous
Negro school of Ellinagen, Germany -- recently visited by me -- is a
elegant example. We recognize that the progress of the Negro in the Army
and elsewhere is largely dependent upon 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
resultant benefits of this health are the crime and venereal rates, which in
the past have averaged several times the white rate -- sometimes up to 5
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
serious crime incidents involving Negroes had fallen from 1-1/3 per
thousand in January to 1/2 per thousand in November -- a decrease of
more than 60%, bringing the rate 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 1946 to 390 in January of this year, a decrease of 37%. 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 10th Infantry Regiments and in the 508th Alabama Regiment of the Famous 25th Division. There are now Negro units in the 1st Infantry Division, the 9th and 10th Infantry Divisions, the 35th Infantry Division, and the 2nd and 3rd Armored Divisions.

Both Negro and white companies are in the 224th Transportation Truck Battalion at Fort Benning, Georgia, the 32nd Truck Battalion at Fort Benning, Georgia, and the 31st 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 necessarily static. Army policies and their execution must be subject to such adjustments as are 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 for the serious question of command -- with which I have previously discussed -- a white company might absorb 95 to 100% Negroes successfully after the first surprise is over. Study should be given to an experiment along this line. All present the real problem in this connection is the Negro non-commissioned officer -- not the Negro officer, alone at this time -- and as long as there is partial segregation -- every Negro officer can be assigned to all-Negro units.

The "special chair" 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 units near the coast. I am particularly in connection with drafting. In the interest of both races the problem must be approached cautiously, but to a large extent on a voluntary basis. Even when so approached it is "cumbersome," 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 profession or 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 1942 by General H. G. Dick, my Military Advisor 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 A. R. Mill -- 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 stability of 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 establish segregation, I understand that segregation carries for them a perception of superiority of the majority group and of inferiority of the minority group -- a conception which may do more harm than the country -- with a pride in their own race -- do not realize.

I also realize that segregation leads itself readily to discrimination, and that many observers 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 practicable method of handling -- and gradually removing -- the segregation problem. We believe that our progress has been good, and that our accomplishments have been the result of natural processes which have resulted from volunteers to the Army's purpose and objectives -- or to the morals of any substantial segment of the nation and society.

I repeat that the Army is not an advocate or adversary of any broad social doctrine. It needs that its duty and responsibility is to provide its part of the national defense and that the efforts it should apply relate entirely to the area of responsibility.

In my view I have perhaps moved a little ahead of the view 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 sincere officers will be reluctant -- to force a pace faster than is consistent with the efficiency and the 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