MEMORANDUM TO HON. CLARK CLIFFORD
The White House

March 23, 1949

Attached is a copy of the statement I made to the
Fahy 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 PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON EQUALITY OF
TREATMENT AND OPPORTUNITY IN THE ARMED SERVICES,
MARCH 20, 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 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 "close with the enemy". The Gilman Board Report, and particularly its first edition, contained specific statements on this question, and the real opinion of nearly 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 confided 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 bodkies that can be moved and handled as trucks and guns. They are individuals who come from civilian life and often return thereto. 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 in 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 comradery 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 recruitments not only in the South but in many other parts of the country, probably making possible 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 B. O. Davis commanded the 4th Infantry Brigade with white officers in it. And I believe that two companies of the First Field Artillery Battalion at Fort Riley have had white officers under them.

But my understanding is that in these 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 asserted 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 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 standard 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 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 observed that a charge of violation be brought to my attention, and the small number of complaints -- and the smaller number of justified ones -- encourage me to believe that these 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 immediately admitted to the Club, and the order was obeyed. Incidentally, on a recent trip to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, I found the Negro officers three members of the Post Officers' Club.

Permit the best answer to the question of the morals of the Negro soldiers -- and the press agitator Negro soldiers -- to be found in their attitude toward the Army. Inexorable facts illustrate that the Negro likes service in the Army equally as well as -- perhaps a little better than -- the white men.

From a considered effort to create an anti-army sentiment among Negrone, like the so-called Civil Resistance campaign last spring, and to be abandoned as a failure, I believe that even a smaller proportion of Negrone resisted -- and even a larger proportion of Negrone willingly and patrioticly accepted induction -- than was the case with 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 Negrone have enlisted in the Army, in increase more in number than ever enlisted in the Army before -- or for that matter in any other military service.

In the last eight months Negro enlistments have averaged 25.5% of all enlistments in the Army, 2.3% of those in the Air Force -- and a similar percentage in the Navy. Today the percentage of Negrone in the three Services are 15.5% for the Army, 2.7% for the Air Force, and 4.5% for the Navy.

While the requirements set by the Navy and the Air Force indicate the number of Negrone accepted in those Services, it is also true that the Army limits the number of Negrone enlisted to approximately 10% of all enlistments, the proportion of Negrone in the civilian population. All in all I am sure that there is no question but that in numbers and by percentage many more Negrone seek to enlist in the Army than in both other military Services.

Incidentally, here has been some discussion of the Army's quotas on Negrone enlistments. Over a period of time these quotas have worked both ways. You will probably recall that during the war there was a maximum quota of Negrone to be employed in certain positions in the service, and now the Army has a maximum quota on the number of Negrone which will be accepted by voluntary enlistment.

One of the primary reasons for this Army quota is the higher enlistment standards of the other Services, which standards tend to reduce the number of Negrone that are acceptable. This disproportionately increases the number of Negrone in the Army, making the problem of utilization -- as well as of segregation -- the more serious for the Army.

If the same enlistment barriers 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 provision. In this connection, the Committee for Negroes noted that at my instance there was a demand from the Selective Service Act of 1948 all quotas and limits by race.
Back to the question of the morale and satisfaction of the Negro soldier — perhaps the most salutary element 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 88% 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 recruiting more soldiers — white and negro — than any military service of my nation has ever entered in peacetime. As to the Negro reenlistment, 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 New Jersey Guard, and despite the fact that it has been a completely integrated organization for more than a year, there are to date only 9 white enlisted men in predominately Negro units and only 58 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 have increased in number, the average of each increase being 11 1/2%. 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 Gibson Board Report was filed in early 1948 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 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 program is illustrated by the large proportion of Negro non-commissioned officers.
Using the top four grades as an example, the Army has 8.9% 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 present status -- is superior to that which he occupies in any other department of the Government, military or otherwise. Nowhere else 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 1984 Negro officers in the Army. On a proportional basis this is an increase of 10% in the last 12 months. This advance has occurred during a time 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 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 enlisted. The famous Negro school of Elblagens, Germany -- recently visited by me -- is an excellent 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 resultant benefits of these 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 venereal crime incidence involving Negroes had fallen from 1.5 per thousand in January to 0.7 per thousand in November -- a decrease of more than 50%, bringing the rate temporarily below the white rate -- for perhaps the first time in any theater. Similarly the Negro venereal index fell to 6.

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in the entire Army has fallen from 64% in 1945 to 30% in January of this year, a decrease of 70%. 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 Report we have, since July, 1947, formed Negro battalions for service in white regiments, and in a few instances have Negro companies in white battalions.

For example, Negro battalions have been organized in the 9th and 10th Infantry Regiments and in the 505th Parachute Regiment of the Famous 82nd Division. There are also Negro units in the 1st Infantry Division, the 9th and 10th Infantry Divisions, the 85th Infantry Division, and the 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions.

Both Negro and white companies are in the 324th Transportation Truck Battalion at Fort Benning, Georgia, the 150th Truck Battalion at Fort Bliss, Texas, and the 353rd 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 entirely static. Army policies and their execution must be subject to such adjustments as are necessary from time to time in most changing conditions.

Personally I have looked into the racial question in every post that I have visited, studying loyalty 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 -- which I have previously discussed -- a white company might absorb 9/10 to 10/10 Negro units successfully after the first surprise is over. Study should be given to an experiment along this line.

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 club" 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 enlisted men's clubs particularly in connection with dancing. In the interest of both races this is a problem which must be approached cautiously, not to a large extent on a voluntary basis. Even when so approached it is "dynamite", 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
1940 by General H. G. Davis, my Military Adviser 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 relatively stable international conditions continuing.

The general problem we are trying to solve is a difficult one and I
have no immediate panacea. I appreciate fully the desire of Negro leaders to
abolish segregation. I understand that segregation carries for them a
connotation of superiority of the majority group and inferiority of the minority
group -- a connotation which may now be the property of
this country -- with a pride in their own race -- do not wish
I also realize that segregation lends itself readily to discrimination,
and that many sincere 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
sweeping -- the segregation problem. We believe that our progress has
been sound, and that our accomplishments have been the result of
practical procedures which have rested firmly in the policy's purpose and
objectives -- or to the needs of any substantial segment of its men and
officers.

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

In my views 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
very -- all sincere citizens 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 our Army, in the event of war, to take
the battlefield with reasonable assurance of success.

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