

THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON EQUALITY
OF TREATMENT AND OPPORTUNITY
IN THE ARMED SERVICES

23 November
1949

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with Mr. Fahy
27 November

In a telephone conversation with Mr. Fahy at 11:00 a.m., November 27, Mr. Fahy said that Mr. Bendetsen had called him on November 25. Bendetsen had asked about the Committee's reaction to the revision of Circular 124. Mr. Fahy said he had told Bendetsen that neither he nor the members of the Committee had yet received from the Army copies of this revision, although he had been in a telephone conversation with General Byers and had asked the general to send him copies. Bendetsen said that he thought there had been a meeting of the Committee on Wednesday, November 16, in Mr. Palmer's office, at which time he had his secretary telephone the revision of 124 to Mr. Palmer's secretary. Mr. Fahy said there had been no meeting of the Committee; that he had heard that Mr. Thompson had called on Mr. Palmer on that date.

Mr. Bendetsen, Mr. Fahy said, then asked whether Mr. Fahy and the Committee, regardless of their views on what the ultimate program of the Army should be, would agree that the revision of 124 accurately reflected the policy statement issued by Secretary Gray and approved by Secretary Johnson on September 30. Mr. Fahy replied to Mr. Bendetsen that he would by no means agree to such a procedure, and he added that if the Army issued a revision of 124 to commanders, he would notify the White House of the Committee's disapproval; and furthermore he would issue a statement to the press making it clear that the Committee had not approved the Army's policy. If this were done, Mr. Fahy said, then a situation would arise which had so far been successfully avoided; i.e., a controversy in public.

Mr. Bendetsen then asked whether Mr. Fahy meant that the Committee had the authority to prevent the Secretary of Defense from approving the Army's policy. Mr. Fahy replied that he was not trying to usurp the prerogatives of either Secretary Gray or Secretary Johnson, and that they, of course, had the right to issue an approved policy statement. The point he wished to make, however, was that the Committee operated under an executive order of the President, and that in the Committee's view the Army's policy did not meet the requirements of the policy expressed in the President's Executive Order 9981.



Mr. Fahy then asked me to call Mr. Bendtsen on Monday morning and inform him that Mr. Fahy had related to me the substance of the conversation with Mr. Bendtsen. Mr. Fahy asked me also to check up whether copies of revision of 124 had been sent to Mr. Fahy, and to ask also for copies to send to other members of the Committee.

E. W. Kenworthy
Executive Secretary

