

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



16 March, 1949

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. FAHY

SUBJECT: Request of Personnel Policy Board to Appear Before Committee

Thomas R. Reid, Chairman of the Personnel Policy Board, asked today if he might appear before the Committee during the March 17-18 meeting in order to place on the record "a draft of a proposal" for a Negro policy for all three services.

I was unable to reach you in New York, so I arranged that Mr. Reid might appear before the Committee at 4:30 P.M., Thursday.

Reid didn't explain the proposal to me. He did say it had nothing in common with Royall's scheme for an experimental unit. He also said it "went on" from the Air Force plan. I remarked that if it went on from there it must be millennial. He corrected himself to say it was somewhat similar.

From Jim Evans I learn that the scheme is divided into peacetime and wartime policies. The latter is reportedly not worked out in detail. The peacetime policy would abrogate the quota system. It also -- though this may not be final -- has some kind of a gimmick whereby a Negro could request transfer to a White unit, providing three others cross with him.

Again according to Evans, the Air Force is somewhat contemptuous of this plan, allowing as it doesn't go as far as its own policy and is loaded with double talk.

I am not at all certain what's in the wind because Reid was anything but candid with me. It may be a perfectly sincere attempt to arrive at an all-service policy which will be an advance upon present policy. It may also be an attempt to stave off the announcement of its own policy by the Air Force on April 1. It may also be an attempt to get something on the record at the Defense level before Forrestal's departure.

Whatever the object is, I think there should have been some forewarning to the Committee Chairman and the Executive Secretary. For if this is to be an attempt at revision of policy, designed for all services, it is foolish for us to be devoting time to the Gillem policy.

I wonder whether as soon as Reid has spoken to the Committee, we should not get expressions of opinion from the three services. If it should happen that the Air Force doesn't go along, it is likely to leak a story to the press to the effect that the Defense level is trying to bottle up its own liberal policy. And the Committee's name might get dragged in.

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I have discovered that a good many people are aware of the plan of the Personnel Policy Board, but there has been no attempt to keep us informed.

Worthington Thompson is apparently unhappy about this, and just called to say that he had asked Reid to call you this evening to fill you in before he testified.