April 19, 1949

Mr. Kenworthy:

Enclosed is copy of the letter from the Secretary of Defense, with memoranda attached, about which I talked to you this morning. Could you get copies of these to each of the Members of the Committee immediately?

Charles Fahy
Dear Mr. Fahey:

I have your letter of 5 April, asking me to appear on 26 April before the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services. I have considered your invitation very carefully. Quite frankly, I believe it would be premature, on the one hand, and unprofitable, on the other, to have not yet had time to inform myself adequately on the details of this difficult problem. However, on 8 April I addressed a memorandum to the three Secretaries, which sets forth a broad initial statement of policy. At the same time, I directed each of the three Departments to do two things: (a) to examine its present practices and determine what steps can and should be taken in the light of this policy and in view of Executive Order 9981 dated 20 July 1948; and (b) to state in writing its detailed implementation of the general policy. I further directed that these written statements should be submitted to the Director of the Personnel Policy Board, Office of the Secretary of Defense, not later than 1 May 1949.

It is my intention to have those statements reviewed by the Personnel Policy Board to determine their adequacy. It is also my intention to have the Personnel Policy Board study our initial statement of policy together with the statements of the Departments in order to determine whether or not that policy may be strengthened or otherwise improved.

For the information of your Committee, I am enclosing a copy of my own memorandum to the three Secretaries on the subject of "Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services."

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Louis Johnson

Enclosure

Mr. Charles Fahey, Chairman
The President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services
Washington, D.C.
MENORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
CHAIRMAN, PERSONNEL POLICY BOARD

SUBJECT: Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services

1. a. It is the policy of the National Military Establishment that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the Armed Services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin.

   b. To assist in achieving uniform application of this policy, the following supplemental policies are announced:

      (1) To meet the requirements of the Services for qualified individuals, all personnel will be considered on the basis of individual merit and ability and must qualify according to the prescribed standards for enlistment, attendance at schools, promotions, assignment to specific duties, etc.

      (2) All individuals, regardless of race, will be accorded equal opportunity for appointment, advancement, professional improvement, promotion and retention in their respective components of the National Military Establishment.

      (3) Some units may continue to be manned with Negro personnel; however, all Negroes will not necessarily be assigned to Negro units. Qualified Negro personnel shall be assigned to fill any type of position, vacancy in organizations or overseas installations without regard to race.

2. Each Department is directed to examine its present practices and determine what forward steps can and should be made
in the light of this policy and in view of Executive Order 9981,
dated July 26, 1948, which directs that this policy shall be put
into effect as rapidly as possible with due regard to the time
required to effectuate any necessary changes without impairing
efficiency or morale.

3. Following the completion of this study, each Department
shall state, in writing, its own detailed implementation of the
general policy stated herein and such supplemental policies as may
be determined by each Service to meet its own specific needs.
These statements shall be submitted to the Chairman of the Per-
sonnel Policy Board, Office of the Secretary of Defense, not
later than 1 May 1949.

/s/ Louis Johnson