

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

28 November 1949

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. BENNETSEN

SUBJECT: 10% Army Racial Quota

During our conversation last week you said that you thought that since last April, when the current racial policy was adopted in the Air Force, Negro enlistments in the Air Force had been running about 16% of the total enlistments.

Sixteen percent is approximately correct for new enlistments of Negroes in the Air Force. Actually it is 15.2%, but, if you include Negro reenlistments (see Table No. 2 attached) the percentage for enlistments and reenlistments of Negroes in the Air Force from 1 May to 30 September comes out to an almost even 10%. As you know the Air Force minimum GCT for entrance during this period was 90, the same score that Army presently is using. The Navy's minimum GCT also was 90 for the same period.

During this five month period the Army (presumably because of its 10% racial quota) accepted for enlistment only 108 Negroes with no prior service. The Air Force, during this period of no racial control, (except for the first 10 days in May) accepted 3,659 Negroes with no prior service. The Navy took in 267 Negroes who enlisted for the first time during the same period.

The Air Force's 3,659 Negroes, plus the Navy's 267 and those of the Army's 108 above GCT 90, it is reasonable to assume, represent the entire pool of Negroes during this five month period who were physically and mentally qualified and desirous of enlisting for the first time in the Armed Services.

If the Army's minimum GCT had also been 90 during these five months and if it had adopted a procurement quota system based on GCT rather than race, it is reasonable to assume that the Army would have received its proportionate share (60% or 2,400) of the roughly 4,000 Negroes ready, willing and able to enlist in the Armed Services during this 5 month period.

These 2,400 hypothetical Negroes (with GCT 90 and over), plus the 3,556 Negroes actually enlisted and reenlisted in the Army, 1 May through 30 September, would have come to about 7% of the total enlistments and reenlistments during this period. If you add another 2,400 hypothetical Negroes between GCT 80 and 89, (World War II experience, and also Fahy Committee estimate of current Negro manpower pool, showed



that there are almost the same number of Negroes between 80 and 89 as there are 90 and above) you would have a total of 8,356 Negroes or 10% of the total Negro and White enlistments and reenlistments of 82,519 for this five month period.

The conclusions I would draw from the above, are:

1. If the minimum score remains at GCT 90, the Army need not fear a disproportionate rise in Negro strength from enlistment.
2. If the minimum score is reduced to 80, and economic conditions remain constant, the Army need not fear a disproportionate rise in Negro strength from enlistment.
3. If economic conditions worsen, the supply of manpower will increase and it is likely that the supply of Negroes will increase in greater proportion to the Whites. But this disproportionate increase in the supply of Negroes will be more than cancelled out because as the total supply of men increases, enlistment standards also are raised, thus automatically decreasing disproportionately the supply of qualified Negroes.
4. I can see an eventual disproportionate increase in Negro strength if the Negro reenlistment rate increases disproportionately over a long period of time. This is an unknown factor and can only be determined by a test of at least two to three years.

I recommend therefore:

1. Abolish racial quota above GCT 90.
2. Establish racial control below GCT 90. (See my memo to your 9 September 1949 copy attached).
3. Establish GCT quota procurement system.
4. Improve quality of Army by weeding out professional privates with low GCT.
5. Test this plan for at least two to three years.

Worthington Thompson.



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ARMY MALE PERSONNEL PROCUREMENT 1 May - 30 Sept 1949

	Enlistments & Reenlistments				New Enlistments			Reenlistments		
	GCT	Total	Negro	%	Total	Negro	%	Total	Negro	%
May	80	11999	900	7.5	5747	20	-	6252	880*	14.1
June	80	14170	1055	7.4	6686	54	-	7484	1001*	13.3
July	80	17154	784	4.6	9018	11	-	8136	773	9.5
August	80	20678	465	2.3	11309	18	-	9369	447	4.7
September	80	18518	352	1.9	10455	5	-	8063	347	4.3
Total		82519	3556	4.3	43215	108	-	39304	3448	8.8

Source of figures: Report AG54, AGO

* Estimated from Report AG61 (R-3)



AIR FORCE MALE PERSONNEL PROCUREMENT 1 May - 30 Sept 1949*

	Enlistments & Reenlistments			New Enlistments			Reenlistments		
	Total	Negro	%	Total	Negro	%	Total	Negro	%
May*	8405	541	6.91	3357	266	7.9	5048	315	6.2
June	13946	1643	11.8	6943	1167	16.8	7003	476	6.8
July	11139	1082	9.7	4872	740	15.2	6267	342	5.5
August	9628	1037	10.7	4132	734	17.8	5496	303	5.5
September	9853	956	9.7	4765	752	15.8	5088	204	4.0
Total	52971	5299	10.0	24069	3659	15.2	28892	1640	5.6

* Current Air Force racial policy adopted 11 May 1949. Period 1-10 May 1949 subject to 10% racial quota. Minimum GCT for entrance was at 90 during these 5 months.

Source of figures: Report AG54, AGO



9 September 1949

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. BENDETSSEN

SUBJECT: The substitution of a GCT Quota for a Racial Quota

1. I understand that Mr. Fahy's memorandum to Mr. Gray on the GCT Quota System will be forwarded this afternoon. Attached is a copy of the final draft of Mr. Fahy's memorandum together with 4 tables of GCT distribution.

2. At your request I am setting down here my thoughts concerning the problem. First, I think it extremely important for good Army public relations that the Army take full credit for formulating, promulgating and implementing the policy. The Army should enunciate the policy in a clear, forthright statement which leaves no doubt in the public mind as to its intentions in establishing a policy of equality of treatment and opportunity designed to improve the quality and efficiency of the Army. Second, the time is propitious, in my view, for the Army to take the initiative in attempting to resolve its differences with the Fahy Committee. I know that nothing would please Mr. Fahy more than an amicable reconciliation of views now, before the White House and the public are drawn further into the affair.

3. I believe that Mr. Fahy's memorandum may help all concerned better to understand the problem and therefore to narrow existing differences. One of the most significant parts of the Fahy memorandum, in my opinion, is the reference to the net Negro manpower pools estimated at 154,000 and 80,000 respectively for Negroes with GCT 80 and above, and 90 and above. I might say parenthetically that I have checked these figures and believe them to be conservative. This indicates that there are 74,000 Negroes between 80 and 89 in the manpower pool who are eligible for enlistment solely in the Army. These Negroes between 80 and 89, eligible only for enlistment in the Army, are almost equal to the number of higher score Negroes, 90 and over who are available for enlistment in all 3 Services.

4. I am persuaded, therefore, that there is justification for the Army's fear of a disproportionate rise in Negro strength if the 10 percent racial control were abolished. However, if the Army could eliminate all controls above 90 and could control the intake of Negroes in GCT 80 to 90 so that Negro strength would never exceed 10 percent of Army strength, it seems to me that its problem would be solved.

5. In order for the Army to accomplish its main peacetime mission to develop the capability of rapid expansion in wartime, it must get its fair share of potential noncommissioned and commissioned officer material - and these come from civilians of average intelligence or better - GCT 90 and above. What I would suggest is that the Army, in an effort to establish parity of enlistment standards with the sister services, (1) set a minimum score for enlistment at GCT 90, (2) abolish the 10 percent racial quota, (3) temporarily,



until a 3 Service job analysis is completed, except for enlistment men in GCT category 80 - 89, (4) because there is a larger proportion of Negroes in this category than Whites, restrict enlistment of Negroes in GCT 80 to 89 to 10 percent of current Army strength in this category.

6. If this procurement system were in operation today, this is how the composition of the Army would shape up. There are presently 88,959 men in the Army (Negroes and White) in the GCT group 80 - 89. Ten percent of this number is 8,895. This would be the limit of Negroes, at the present time, in GCT 80 - 89. There are presently in the Army 26,512 Negroes with a GCT of 90 and above. The total of Negroes would be then, roughly 35,500, if this plan were in operation. Actually, there are now in the Army about 67,000 Negroes - which illustrates what a large proportion of Negroes are in the low GCT categories.

7. Of course, it will be pointed out that if the current racial quota were abolished the number of Negroes above 90 would increase. It would. But would it expand very much? I hardly think so, because the total Negro manpower pool above 90 is 80,000. Out of this pool must come the Navy and Air Force enlistments. And there would be a good many in the pool with no desire to enlist.

8. Therefore, I think it is safe to assume that under such a plan Negro strength in the Army would decline over a period of three or four years to 40,000 - 45,000, if economic conditions remain the same. If, economic conditions worsen in a few years, the Army would have a cushion of 20,000 - 25,000 Negro spaces to absorb any depression-spurred influx of eligible Negroes.

9. The advantages of this plan, it seems to me are (1) it gives all the better qualified Negroes a chance to enlist without restriction; (2) it restricts the number in Class IV- 80-89; and, therefore, (3) it will improve the quality of the Army while, at the same time, remove in part the discrimination of the present quota system which is morally indefensible to say nothing of working against military efficiency.

10. Gradually, of course, as the general level of Army enlistments improves and the number of 80-89 men declines, the number of Negroes in GCT 80-89 will also diminish. Correspondingly, as Negro education improves, more and more Negroes will come in above 90. But the number over 90 will hardly exceed 10 percent of total Army strength, and since it appears that integration is on the way, it will be much easier to integrate the high-score Negro.

11. I think the Fahy Committee might be receptive to this idea.

Worthington Thompson



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