MEMORANDUM FOR MR. BERNSTEIN  

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON  

28 November 1949  

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 14.2%, 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 109 Negroes with no prior service. The Air Force, during this period of no racial control, (except for the first 100 days in May) accepted 3,559 Negroes with no prior service. The Navy took in 247 Negroes who enlisted for the first time during the same period.  

The Air Force’s 3,559 Negroes, plus the Navy’s 247 and those of the Army’s 109 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 (600 or 2,400) of the roughly 1,000 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 3,559 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 Pety 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 607 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, enlist-
   ment standards will also be raised, thus automatically
   decreasing disproportionately the supply of qualified
   Negroes.

4. I can see an eventual disproportionate increase in
   Negro strength if the Negro enlistment 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 607 90.
2. Establish racial control below 607 90. (See my memo to
   your 9 September 1943 copy attached).
3. Establish OGT quota procurement system.
4. Improve quality of Army by weeding out professional
   privates with low OGT.
5. Test this plan for at least two to three years.

Worthington Thompson.
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<th>New</th>
<th>Total</th>
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Source of figures: Report AOS4,402
* Estimated from Report AOS1 (B-2)
Table No. 2

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* Current Air Force racial policy adopted 31 May 1949. Period 1–10 May 1949 subject to 10% racial quota. Minimum GQ for entrance was at 90 during these 5 months.

Source of figures: Report A25p, A50
MEMORANDUM FOR MR. BENJAMIN

9 September 1949

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 announce 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 never would 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. If 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 Service job analysis is completed, accept for enlistment men in
OCT category 80 - 89. (a) Because there is a larger proportion of Negroes
in this category than Whites, restrict enlistment of Negroes in OCT 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 88,999 men in
the Army (Negroes and Whites) in the OCT group 80 - 89. Ten percent of this
number is 8,899. This would be the limit of Negroes, at the present time, in
OCT 80 - 89. There are presently in the Army 26,532 Negroes with a OCT of
80 and above. The total of Negroes would be then, roughly 35,450, 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 OCT categories.

7. Of course, it will be pointed out that if the current racial quota
were abolished the number of Negroes above 80 would increase. It would.
But would it expand very much? I hardly think so, because the total Negro
manpower pool above 80 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 - 55,000, if economic conditions remain the same. If, economic
conditions worsen in a few years, the Army would have a cushion of 20,000 -
35,000 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 OCT
80-89 will also diminish. Correspondingly, as Negro education improves,
more and more Negroes will come in above 80. But the number over 80 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 Policy Committee might be receptive to this idea.

Worthington Thompson