

FUTURE RELEASE

PLEASE NOTE DATE

NATIONAL MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT  
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
Washington 25, D. C.

HOLD FOR RELEASE  
TO A.M. NEWSPAPERS  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1948

NO. 149-48  
PUBLIC INFORMATION  
RE 6700 Ext. 3201-3202

NEGRO LEADERS SUBMIT REPORT AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS ON SEGREGATION

Secretary of Defense James Forrestal today made public a report received by him from sixteen participants in a recent National Defense Conference on Negro Affairs. The report pressed for speedy elimination of racial segregation, which it criticized as neither necessary nor justifiable, in the armed forces.

The sixteen Negro civilian leaders who conferred with National Military Establishment officials April 26 at the invitation of Secretary Forrestal reported finding encouragement in the policies of the Navy and the Air Service toward Negro personnel, but said they found that "there was no prevailing opinion among Army leadership that racial segregation could or should be eliminated to any greater extent than provided for in current official policy".

"It was made clear," the report stated, "that there could be no meeting of minds between representative Negro leadership and their government, except on the basis of agreement that racial segregation in the armed forces is intolerable to the people of a free country.

"With such an agreement, the conferees reaffirm their readiness and availability to offer practical suggestions as to how segregation can be eliminated and the safety of our country be advanced rather than imperiled."

The report reiterates, however, statements made in a press conference April 26 that the conferees will not serve as consultants in devising better administration for segregated services.

The written report was submitted to the Secretary of Defense by the Conference chairman, Lester B. Granger, executive secretary of the National Urban League, with a forwarding letter offering seven specific recommendations looking toward the eventual creation of what was described as equal racial opportunity in the armed services.

more



In a letter of appreciation to Chairman Granger and the other conferees, Secretary Forrestal assured them that as they recommended, their report would be transmitted to the Presidential Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services.

The specific recommendations proposed by Chairman Granger as representing the current thinking of those conferees who could be reached for an opinion canvass at this time are:

(1) Restudy by the Office of the Secretary of Defense of the Gillem Board report on utilization of Negro manpower in the post-war Army. The conferees' report challenged emphatically the Army's interpretation of the Gillem Board report, insisting that "certain basic recommendations were either ignored or were misinterpreted".

(2) A prompt move by the Army to establish a body of first hand experience with completely integrated military units from the divisional down to the squad level as "laboratory projects" designed to make eventual elimination of segregation thoroughly efficient. The conferees' report quoted Army spokesmen as declaring such "demonstration projects" should not be attempted "at this time".

(3) Unqualified approval from the Army for those states which desire immediately to do away with racial segregation in the National Guard.

(4) Abolition of racial quotas now established in enlistment proceedings.

(5) Elimination by the Navy of the Stewards' branch as a separate division of labor in the service restricted to Negroes, Filipinos and other "colored" minorities.

(6) Increase the currently small number of Negro Naval officers by the commissioning of qualified Negro members of the Officers Reserve.

(7) Adoption of special recruiting methods to increase the currently low percentage of Negroes in the Navy's general service.



Text of letter from Lester B. Granger, transmitting the report of the conference of Negro leaders:

Dear Secretary Forrestal:

In addition to the general statement which I am presenting on behalf of the conference group that met with you on April 26th, I am presenting in this letter certain specific recommendations that embody the thinking of several members of the group. I say several members instead of the entire group, because it has been impossible since the first of June to circularize the entire conference group frequently enough to obtain a consensus on specific recommendations. I believe I am justified, however, in thinking that you will still be interested in calling this additional statement to the attention of the committee which the President will shortly appoint to advise with you on equal opportunity in the armed forces.

- 1) The Gillem Board report should be restudied by the Office of Defense to determine what discrepancies, if any, exist between the actual recommendations contained or implied in the original report and the condensed summary to which publicity has been given and which seems to serve as the actual "guide" for present Army policy.
- 2) The Army should move promptly to establish a body of first-hand experience with completely integrated military units from the divisional down to the squad level. Such experience may be secured through the establishment of racially-mixed units, - company, battalion and regimental - distributed throughout various commands or through establishment of a non-segregated division. These experiments should be considered not as substitutes for the elimination of segregation in all areas of service, but rather as laboratory projects designed to make eventual elimination of segregation thoroughly efficient.
- 3) The Army should move immediately to repair its unfortunate error with respect to racial policies of national guard units. Those states which desire immediately to do away with racial segregation in its national guard units should receive hearty and unqualified approval from the Army. The Army should welcome such steps as making more easy its own inescapable step of eliminating racial segregation.
- 4) It should be a matter of formal published policy not only for the Navy, but for the Marines, the Air Forces, and the Army, that "any man regardless of race, color or creed who meets physical, mental or moral standards is qualified for enlistment or reenlistment in the regular Army (or Air Forces or Marines) in any of its branches." Such a statement of policy would automatically do away with the racial quotas now established in enlistment proceedings.

more



- 5) The Navy should eliminate the Stewards branch as a separate division of labor in the service restricted to Negroes, Filipinos and other "colored" minorities. The differential in rates now existing between the Stewards branch and other branches of Navy service should also be eliminated. Stewards should be selected, rated and promoted on the same basis as men in other branches, with leadership, character, intelligence and excellence of service being recognized as a normal prerequisite for advancement.
- 6) In view of the small number (4) of Negro naval officers, the Navy should consider seriously the commissioning of qualified Negro members of the Officers Reserve in the regular Navy in responsible billets. This would have a good result not only with the general public, but also with the enlisted and commissioned personnel of the Navy itself, for a larger number of Negro officers commissioned in regular service would be standing proof that ability, and not race, determines the man's rank.
- 7) In view of the low percentage of Negroes in the Navy's general service, special recruiting methods would seem to be indicated so as to "sell" Negro high school and college students on the Navy as a self-respecting, secure and rewarding career. Such methods should include authorized tours of Negro commissioned and petty officers to schools throughout the country.

These are only some of the various recommendations which have been discussed among members of the conference group. In presenting them to your attention, I assure you once more that the members of that group stand ready to serve your office in making plans for the removal of the last vestige of racial discrimination from the armed forces of the United States.



Text of the report of the conference group of Negro leaders to Secretary Forrestal:

Approximately four months have passed since a group of Negro conferees met at your invitation in Washington on April 26th to discuss the racial policies of the United States Military Establishment. The meeting ended in a fashion that was probably as disappointing to the heads of the Military Establishment as it was to the conferees themselves. The conference group's unanimous opinion stated to the Secretary of Defense and later to the press was that neither that group nor any other representative Negro leadership could give advice to the defense officials of our country under conditions that implied condoning of racial segregation or any other form of racial discrimination.

Since that time a decisive step has been taken by the President of the United States in the form of an executive order addressed to the question of racial discrimination in the armed forces. A committee will shortly be appointed to advise with the officials of the Military Establishment on implementation of that executive order.

This report, therefore, is to summarize the spirit and content of the discussions that went forward on April 26th and to offer certain recommendations inspired by those discussions. It is our hope that the report with its encouched recommendations will serve to clarify some of the issues involved in the subject of racial discrimination, to refute the general position taken by some of the military, and to serve as reference material as the Secretary of Defense considers next steps in cooperation with the committee which is to be appointed.

The conferees greatly appreciate the opportunity which was afforded on April 26th to engage in first-hand discussion with Mr. Forrestal and members of the secretariat and staff regarding issues and problems directly affecting the lives of fifteen million Americans of Negro descent. Though acceptance of Secretary Forrestal's invitation involved considerable sacrifice to many of the group, attendance was an inescapable duty. For no question looms larger before the attention of our Negro public, or has produced more active resentment in recent years, than the question of the conditions under which the Negro citizen is required to serve in certain branches of the armed forces. The opinion of Negro Americans is united in the belief that racial segregation is especially intolerable when imposed by the federal government in any area of citizenship activity. It is even more outrageous when it is carried out in the armed forces, where a citizen stands ready to die, if necessary, for the protection of his country.

For this reason, the conferees were deeply disappointed, and indeed offended, by the general attitude assumed by some of the spokesmen for the armed forces, notably Secretary of Army Royall. For Mr. Royall declared that at that time there was no prevailing opinion among Army leadership that racial segregation could or should be eliminated to any greater extent than provided for in current official policy.

more



Our discussions with spokesmen for the Navy and Air Forces, as well as the Army, left us with certain general, but well-defined, reaction:

### Navy

Regarding the Navy, we felt that during the closing years of the war and the year immediately following, a serious and, in general, successful effort was made completely to revise Navy policy and practice in the use of Negro personnel. From a policy which, at the beginning of the war, had barred the use of Negro personnel as commissioned officers in any capacity, and as enlisted men except in the Stewards' Branch, the Navy progressed by the beginning of 1946 to the place where its official directive, dated January 25, 1946, and addressed to the subject of recruiting read:

"Any man, regardless of race, color or creed, who meets physical, mental and moral standards, is qualified for enlistment or reenlistment in the regular Navy in any of the ratings."

Later, circular letter 48-46, which reemphasized the Navy's policy of non-differentiation because of race or color in the administration of its personnel, read as follows:

"Subject: Negro Naval Personnel - Abolishment of all restrictions, governing types of assignment for which eligible. - AlNav 423-45.

". . . effective immediately all restrictions governing types of assignments for which Negro naval personnel are eligible are hereby lifted. Henceforth, they shall be eligible for all types of assignments in all ratings in all activities and all ships of the naval service.

"Commanding officers will thoroughly familiarize themselves with reference 3 (AlNav 423-45) and will take necessary steps to assure that its provisions and intent are known and understood by officers and enlisted personnel under them.

"In the utilization, housing, messing and other facilities, no special or unusual provisions will be made for the accommodations of Negroes.

"A redistribution of personnel by administrative commands is hereby directed so that by 1 October 1946 no ship or naval activity will have an excess of 10% Negro naval personnel . . .

"The provisions of the above paragraph are not applicable to the assignment of enlisted personnel for duty at the Naval Academy in view of the requirements for the Stewards' Branch."



Subsequent to this order, another directive made it possible for personnel in the Stewards' Branch to be transferred to ratings in other types of naval service. It was made clear that stewards' mates desiring and able to qualify for other types of service should be encouraged to do so.

The conferees recognize this progression of democratic change in policy as being significant and heartening, since it is indicative of what can be accomplished in the armed service if top leadership is sincerely desirous of making a change. Therefore, our questions addressed to Assistant Secretary Brown were designed to establish to what extent the official policy as set forth in the directive's quota has actually been carried out in practice. We learned that of the total naval enlisted strength, Negroes now compose approximately 5½%, or 17,740. Of these, however, slightly more than one-third, or only 4,838, are in general service, assigned to those types of duties which popular understanding associates with "the fighting Navy". The remainder, 12,902, are in the Stewards and Commissary Branches.

To these figures the conferees entertained the following reaction: It is encouraging that nearly 5,000 young Negroes are now distributed in service throughout the Navy among such ratings as machinists, boatswains, storekeeper, radar operator and gunners, and are assigned to all ship, shore and sea duty, including destroyers, cruisers, battleships and aircraft carriers. The actual number involved, however, is below the proportion we might expect from the percentage of Negroes in the total national population and, therefore, does not even yet constitute a convincing demonstration that the "new policy" is working at top efficiency.

Obviously, there is a lag in the recruiting methods now used by the Navy, or in the Negro public's understanding of the enlarged service opportunities now obtainable for members of our race. This lag should be corrected, to the end that the Navy will attract and hold young Negroes as successfully as it does young whites. Furthermore, continuance of the Stewards' Branch as a special "Negro activity" in the Navy leaves the service open to continued assertions that racial segregation is practiced - even though to a limited degree.

It is unfortunately true that in the minds of most Negroes a stigma is attached to types of employment in which Negroes may be categorized as "servants", whether in uniform or out. The conferees were given to understand that the Stewards' Branch is open to personnel of all races, but we were informed that only Negroes, Filipinos, and, in a few rare cases, Guamanians are actually to be found in this branch. We, therefore, question whether it is possible for the Navy to maintain a Stewards' Branch on its present base except as a special Negro activity; and whether steward service, which is obviously necessary, should not be rotated among enlisted men in general in the same way as cooks and helpers' assignments in the food service for enlisted personnel.



We understand, moreover, that there continues to be a distressing dearth of Negro commissioned officers in the Navy. Four are now in active service - one lieutenant, a reserve officer, assigned to the Bureau of Public Information. Of those holding regular Navy commissions, one is a nurse ensign assigned to Bethesda Hospital; and two are ensigns, one now aboard a combat vessel, and the other still on shore duty. We learn, also, that six Negro naval reserve officer training candidates were possibilities for commissions at the end of the current school year, and that six others are enrolled in ROTC courses.

The Navy has no Negro dentists or physicians commissioned for regular service, and these figures indicate a failure on the Navy's part to reach such qualified young Negroes as would naturally be expected to implement an interest in a Navy career by enrolling in an ROTC course, or by entering the Naval Academy at Annapolis. One explanation of this dearth of Negro candidates is to be found in the fact that among the 52 naval reserve officers training schools established in colleges, North and South, the majority are in colleges with a limited number of Negro enrollees; and not one is established in a Negro college in the South, where the overwhelming majority of Negro college students are to be found. As long as the laws of certain states, notably in the South, effectively bar Negro students from the benefit of naval training in white colleges, the Navy should be all the more alert to make certain that qualified Negro students from such sections are not barred from admission to a reserve officers training course merely because of their race. The conferees recognize that the Navy itself does not consider that its goal of absolute equality of opportunity and complete elimination of racial discrimination has been fully attained. We assume, therefore, that Navy leadership is prepared progressively to initiate other steps toward attainment of its goal, and that these steps will deal especially with the increase of Negro commissioned officer leadership, elimination of racial differentials in the marine corps, improvement of the conditions of service in the Stewards' Branch, and education and training of Negro young men interested in the Navy as a career.

### Air Forces

From Assistant Secretary of the Air Force Zuckert, the conferees obtained a picture of developments in racial policy as carried on by the Air Forces. We learned that as long as the Air Forces were a part of the Army, the recommendations of the Gillem Board were followed as policy guide. Since separation from the Army, "the Air Force has continued to follow, in the main, the policies laid down by the Gillem Board. The objectives of the Air Force aim at (1) use of Negro manpower on the broadest possible professional scale; (2) maintenance of an approximate 1-10 ratio of Negro personnel insofar as that personnel can qualify by Air Force standards; (3) organizing both combat and service units from available Negro manpower; (4) employing that personnel in Negro units as groups or squadrons, and



grouping those units with whites in the composite organizations; (5) affording all personnel, regardless of race, equal opportunities for appointment or enlistment promotion and retention; (6) giving to commanders within the limits established by the foregoing maximum latitude of authority in solving purely local problems."

Mr. Zuckert declared that Air Force leaders accept as an ultimate policy objective the elimination of segregation among the personnel by the unrestricted use of Negroes "in free competition for any duty within the Air Force for which they may qualify. The limit of attaining this end will depend, naturally, upon the degree to which that attainment affects the effective operation of the Air Forces."

We learned that the total Air Force personnel includes 294,736 whites, as compared with 26,258 Negroes, or slightly less than 10% of the total being Negro.

In the give-and-take of discussion between the conferees and Secretary Zuckert and Lieutenant General Edwards, in charge of Air Force personnel, we elicited a statement that effective use of Air Force manpower is handicapped by segregation in special units. We were informed, also, that since the Air Force has been removed from Army jurisdiction, it no longer feels bound by any limitations of policy theoretically imposed by the provisions of the report of the Gillem Board. The conferees interpreted these statements as assurance that present Air Force policy deplors racial segregation in the use of manpower and desires and plans consistent steps toward the end of "free competition for any duty within the Air Force."

If our understanding on this point is correct, we consider this position an encouraging departure from traditional Army policy, which should be supported not only by top leadership in the Air Force itself, but also by the Office of Defense and the President of the United States. Such support would insure the most rapid and effective development of the policy as described above.

### Army

From Army Secretary Royall the conferees had a frank, detailed and lucid presentation of present Army policy with respect to the use of Negro personnel. While appreciating Mr. Royall's frankness, we emphatically differed with both the basis and his development of the point of view which he presented. In the matter of numbers and proportions and distribution of Negro Army personnel, the Army record compares favorably with, and at times exceeds, those of the other branches of the armed services. During the war, there were 8,000 Negro officers. Since the close of the war, that number has been reduced to approximately 1,000, of whom about 50 are regular Army officers; 25% of Negro personnel are in combat forces, as compared with 27% of the whites. Secretary Royall pointed out that "no Army, or no military service in this or any other country has ever even approached that parity, as far as I know."



Secretary Royall referred to the Gillem Board report as the basis for current racial policy in the Army. He declared that a study had been made since his installation in office to determine whether changed conditions required further action in implementing or amending the Gillem report. He stated that the Chief of Staff, General Eisenhower, and his complete staff had recommended that there be no change in the Gillem report. He declared that he made a restudy at a later date under General Bradley, who, with the support of the same general staff reached the same conclusion.

Secretary Royall declared further that these decisions concurred with his own firm opinion in both instances. The Gillem report he described as providing "that there must be segregation in company units or their equivalent..... but that there can be both white and Negro companies in battalions and larger units. The report provides for the use of Army specialists without segregation, and that every type of service be, as far as possible, afforded to both Negroes and whites." He admitted that the separate Negro company was the "floor" and not the "ceiling" of segregation, referring to the 555th Infantry Parachute Battalion as an example of a larger segregated unit.

When asked about his attitude toward the establishment of "demonstration projects" as a way of showing what can be done with "integrated" commands from top to bottom, Secretary Royall declared that "after very careful study and consideration with those who know a great deal about the military", he had concluded that at this time such demonstration projects should not be attempted. He dismissed as "political" any inferred connection between the Army's racial policies and the standing of this nation as a democratic example before the attention of the world.

At one point Secretary Royall's interpretation of the Gillem report was challenged authoritatively. It was pointed out that the report recommended three, and not simply two, types of utilization of Negro personnel - in segregated type units, not to exceed regimental size; as specialists on the basis of individual ability and capacity; and the third, in mixed company units on the company basis, thus affording free opportunity for observation, the acquiring of experience, and the development of tested procedures in laying down permanent Army policy.

In response to Secretary Royall's general presentation, certain points were strongly established by members of the conference group. It was pointed out that in its insistence upon racial segregation because of "military expediency", and in its contention that "experience" argued in favor of separation of the races, the Army assumes a position which is at variance with the experience of other branches of the defense services, and which has never been justified even by the Army's own experience. For the Army has never experimented on any broad scale with the integration of Negro enlisted personnel in mixed company groups. Its insistence, therefore, expresses an attitude, rather than acquired experience. Insofar as experience with "integrated" assignments has been obtained - as, for instance, in the training and



assignment of Army specialists - the reported results have been in favor of such integration, rather than against it.

The Army's present policy, to which it stubbornly adheres, seems to be a grudging adjustment of the original mobilization plans drawn up well in advance of World War II, which contemplated the use of Negroes under the most limited conditions imaginable. These plans were based upon a mistaken conception held by Army staff leaders, both of the intrinsic ability of Negro troops and of their actual record in World War I. That conception was not arrived at accidentally. The conferees are agreed that it was the result of deliberate distortions of history, propagated by racially prejudiced individuals, and calculated to present to the public, and to Army leadership as well, a false notion regarding the ability, courage and adaptability of Negro military personnel.

It was also pointed out to Secretary Royall that in its insistence upon present policy, and its refusal even to consider widespread demonstration projects pitched on a higher policy level, the Army disregards successful experimentation carried on in such states as Massachusetts, New York, Indiana and Illinois, which deal with the individual human being as a human being, and not as a member of an "inferior" or "superior" racial group. The Army, therefore, forces upon Negroes "uniformly and without exception" a pattern of racial segregation which legally prevails in a minority of the states of the Union. It was contended that in so doing, "the Army does severe violence to the Negro as a citizen", by "deliberately operating below the level of American experience and purpose."

Reference was made repeatedly to the fact that although the Army constantly refers to the Gillem Board report as its accepted guide and as a reason for not raising present levels of policy and practice, even the Gillem Board report has not been followed. For, as one conferee pointed out, in summarizing and publicizing the report certain basic recommendations were either ignored or were misinterpreted.

#### The Secretary of Defense

In the concluding session with the Secretary of Defense, the conferees presented their initial reactions to the information and opinions offered by defense secretariat earlier in the day and presented, as well, certain tentative conclusions on which Mr. Forrestal's comment was asked. The Secretary of Defense declared that the convictions, aims and purposes of the conferees coincided with his own. He pointed out that differences in structure between the Army, the Navy and the Air Forces presented a real problem to any over-all command which sought to remove any discrepancies in racial policies existing among them. He stressed the "gradualist" approach of the Navy in completely revising its own racial policies, and pointed out that the revision had been accomplished with a minimum of public discussion and with the aim of announcing success after it had been achieved, rather than



predicting it before it should be guaranteed. He pointed out that Navy changes had been made with the full approval and support of top service leadership, inferring that such support and approval was absent among the Army General Staff.

He reminded the conferees that the Office of Defense had been in existence only six months, and that a large number of basic questions of organization, administration and policy need to be settled. He declared that he would not issue a statement of policy in the form of an official directive until he had more assurance that the directive would be supported by the very persons who must administer it. For, Mr. Forrestal declared, "the utterance of a policy that is not followed through is more destructive than not having one." He expressed preference for facing "unpleasant criticism", rather than "do something that is manifestly insincere and specious." The Secretary of Defense indicated his hope that from some of the members of the conference group, and other sources as well, he might be assured of further consultation and advice on ways of solving the serious racial problems of the defense services. He desired that some advisory group would keep his office "conscious of the problem", but he insisted once more that people cannot be "forced into cooperation, mutual respect and coordination, such as unification of the services requires simply by law, by fiat." Continued indoctrination and patient education, he declared, must be carried on at the same time.

In response, the conferees repeated the statement made to Mr. Royall - namely that, contrary to Army opinion, segregation must be considered a form of discrimination. They pointed out that the entire meeting impressed the conferees with the inadequacy of the nation's approach to the entire problem of training Negro youth for the armed forces. It was declared that while prejudice and bigotry are undoubtedly prevalent in the armed forces, as in the nation at large, some of it is manufactured in official policies set by military leadership, and still more is accelerated and intensified by military subservience to, rather than correction of, ignorant attitudes among the public at large. The Secretary was made aware in emphatic terms that no member of the conference group would for one moment agree that segregation is necessary or justifiable as a policy; and that no member would agree to advise with the Office of Defense to the end of perpetuating and improving the administration of a segregated form of service. It was declared that the conferees were unanimous in desiring to end, and not perpetuate, racial segregation in all phases of national life. Their availability as future advisors, whether as individuals or as a group, was dependent upon assurance that their services would be directed toward the elimination of racial segregation and other forms of discrimination.

This moral position assumed by the conferees has been justified by subsequent developments. It was our insistence that the President of the United States had an obligation derived from the Constitution itself and from the specific responsibility of his office to move with courage and practical wisdom toward elimination of discrimination,



including segregation, from all areas of the Military Establishment. The President's executive order on the subject, already referred to, constitutes a heartening first step in this direction. Recommendations of the committee which the President will appoint and the action taken by the Office of Defense upon those recommendations may well constitute the second and decisive step.

In his action the President has the unqualified approval not merely of fifteen million Negro Americans, but also that of millions of other citizens of various races and faiths; for thoughtful and liberty-loving citizens are now thoroughly aware that racial segregation in our armed forces injures the morale of those directly affected, impairs the efficiency of our national defense, and harms the reputation of our nation in the world at large precisely because racial segregation is so sharply at variance with the intent and the ideals of democracy. The steps which have already been taken in the more forward-looking service branches, and the success which has thus far attended such efforts furnish conclusive proof that the goal is attainable in other branches if sufficient wisdom and courage are displayed by official leadership.

It is as unwise as it is unsound to cite the resistance of military leadership against basic changes in policy as sufficient cause for delaying immediate and effective action. This would imply that basic citizenship policies are controlled by military instead of civilian leadership, and such an implication must never be accepted by a peace-loving democratic people. It is true that changes in basic attitudes cannot be accomplished by miraculous overnight conversion of the public, but this is all the more reason for moving immediately with a program of indoctrination, education, discipline and progressive demonstration in order to speed final definitive action.

Even without introduction of the President's executive order the Army is obligated by its adoption of the original Gillem Board report to implement it under its broadest rather than its narrowest construction. It is our understanding that the broad construction provided for a scientifically experimental program including the development, not simply of Negro company units integrated with white units in battalions and regiments, but also company and platoon units wherein Negroes and whites are trained, fed and housed together with absolutely no racial separation. If such projects had been initiated, the Army would by now have acquired a fund of information similar to that acquired by the Navy, as it progressed from a few all-Negro-manned vessels, to a 10% distribution of Negro personnel among a limited number of ships, to the present unsegregated assignment of Negro personnel in all ships of the service. In fact, the Army has some store of experience built up by its own policy in training and assigning Negro specialists and in certain activities of the Army Air Forces.

In conclusion, it should be stated that the Washington conference on April 26th was undoubtedly a helpful experience for the conferees present, as well as for the Office of Defense, if it is regarded as



exploratory in nature. The conferees had an opportunity to learn at first-hand of actual conditions and attitudes prevailing within the Military Establishment and to acquaint the military leadership with the thinking of representative Negroes on the subject of racial policy. It was made clear that there could be no meeting of minds between representative Negro leadership and their government, except on the basis of agreement that racial segregation in the armed forces is intolerable to the people of a free country.

With such agreement, the conferees reaffirm their readiness and availability to offer practical suggestions as to how segregation can be eliminated and the safety of our country be advanced rather than imperiled.

\*\*\*\*\*