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Mobilizing Black America

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ABSTRACT

Through review of previous military studies and related material, this study reviews the history of black mobilization in the American Military. Specifically, the study reveals historically unique obstacles to black mobilization and how America's defense establishment responded to those obstacles in efforts to maximize military manpower potential.

The study identifies inadequate black education and health care as historically unique socioeconomic obstacles which fundamentally diminish black American human capital and, as a direct consequence, diminish America's military manpower potential as well. The obstacles have their historic roots in American slavery and are portrayed as logical symptoms of that institution.

Department of Defense black mobilization policy is described as the product of a continuous balancing act of three perceptions: the nation's Constitutional ideal, military core values, and force credibility. These dynamic balancing act components collectively afford black mobilization policy a historical perspective, offer plausible explanation for past policies, and insights into future ones.

While acknowledging Department of Defense success in executing the balancing act, the study does not suggest resolution of the black mobilization issue. Rather, the study asserts that resolution will come only when the unique socioeconomic obstacles are resolved in the larger American society. To that end, the study offers the American Military as a useful model.

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I- INTRODUCTION

Since 1775 when the Council of War of the Continental Army voted "to reject the Negroes altogether" to George Washington's subsequent declaration the he "would begin recruiting free blacks and reenlisting those discarded as a result of the recent ban ..."[1], the Department of Defense and its precursors have exercised a historic vested interest in black mobilization. Indeed the pattern of vacillation and anxiety which characterized black mobilization policy emerged during the revolution and carries residual strength today.

Military power is derived from mobilization which Joint Publication 0-1 defines as:

> The act of assembling and organizing
> national resources to support national
> objectives in time of war or other
> emergencies[2]

The United States has always experienced difficulty mobilizing the black American segment of its population for military service. The Department of Defense has continuously sought to maximize military power by maximizing the value and availability of the nation's human capital. Through review of previous military studies and related material, this study seeks answers to the following questions regarding the black mobilization component of the nation's human resource:

* *What unique obstacles historically impeded black mobilization?*

*   *How did the American Military address these the unique obstacles?*

In search for answers, this study revisits the transformation of the American Military from a racially segregated institution to an integrated one. The American Military's application of race relations principles is widely praised and emulated by other institutions. Unappreciated perhaps, is that military race relations policy is a continuously evolving product derived from a continuing perception balancing act of Constitutional ideal, American military core values, and force credibility. The quality and value of the policy is measured in terms of the political acceptance level of American's mainstream, and of its military utility to wage war. These balancing act components respond to basic societal questions.

o Constitutional Ideal

America's Constitutional ideal espouses both citizen rights and responsibilities. While our Declaration of Independence explicitly conveys the ideal of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness", our Constitution implicitly conveys the notion of responsibility which suggests that citizens in receipt of their rights have an obligation to defend the nation. In practice, groups of American citizens have "earned" their rights and gained group acceptance through military service. Thus, the historic

cost of group acceptance is group blood sacrifice for the nation in war.

This ideal and the diverse nature of American culture impose a manpower policy dilemma upon the military. How does the military generate a racially representative force from a manpower pool which is the product of a diverse culture within which opportunities for social and economic advancement are racially and ethnically disproportionate, particularly for black Americans? On what basis does the military deny citizens the privilege to serve when that privilege is a litmus test for group acceptance and upward mobility in American society? The Constitutional ideal component of military manpower policy is a response to these and other emotional but fundamental questions.

o Military Core Values

Selfless service to country, submission to civilian authority, valor, fidelity, honor, loyalty, and commitment to duty are all widely accepted components of the American military's core value makeup. "Patriotism" is probably the one word that captures all of the intangible components. There is no acknowledged economic component within military core values. The internalization of core values mandates acceptance of the military as a professional calling much like a religious one. This is totally inconsistent with the notion that the military is a "job", or "stepping stone" for economic or social progress. How then does the military correct itself when its traditional

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policies and practices place it in conflict with civilian
authority which has historically subjected its influence to
political and socioeconomic considerations?

o *Credibility*

Credibility at home and abroad is a component of force
utility. The very recent histories of Desert Storm and Vietnam
underscore the importance of the moral link between the American
Military and mainstream America. This link is a key ingredient
to our national will and is better sustained when America's
mainstream views the military as "theirs" --- rightly of wrongly,
this perception or credibility contains racial, ethnic, and
socioeconomic dimensions.

> Yet, at the bottom, mobilization is an act of
> political *will*. For the American Nation and
> its society it is a decision by the
> President, supported by the Congress, and
> ultimately by the people, to prepare for war
> (sometimes even after the actual onset of
> armed hostilities), or, for the deterrence of
> war.[3]

Likewise, perceptions of allies and potential adversaries
alike probably gauge the strength of our resolve by the
socioeconomic composition of our military. Just as importantly,
they gauge our commitment to our ideals more by our manner of
conduct at home than by our words abroad. How then, does the
military balance political credibility against military utility
in formulation of manpower policy?

Rarely are the dynamics of constitutional ideal, military
core values, and credibility in congruence. It is within the

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context of these dynamics that this study seeks to capture a coherent history of black mobilization.

II- PREVIOUS STUDIES

ARMY WAR COLLEGE STUDY No. 127-25
dated October 30, 1925.

Purpose

This study asked "to what extent shall negro man power be used in a military effort contemplated by the War Department General Mobilization Plan!"[4] The study offered recommendations as to the organization, manning, and employment, of Army units containing black soldiers as well as the standards for appointment and promotion of black officers.

Summary

The study enumerated 17 "Opinions of the War College" which, among other things, asserted that "the negro officer was a failure as a combat officer in the World War"[4], ... "In the process of evolution the American negro has not progressed as far as the other sub-species of the human family ..."[5], and prescribed the organization of black units to be commanded by white officers.

Most significant in the study was the assertion that inadequate education and health among black troops severely

limited their ability to serve and thus restricted their employment.

The War College Commandant's recommended that the study be the taken as the basis for War Department mobilization policy.

Commentary

This was not an impartial study. Indeed it's overtly racist tone reflected the sentiment of the era and undoubtedly diminished its value to the War Department. Presented with a challenge to maximize the nation's manpower potential, the authors of this study failed to set aside their prejudices.

The War College study was basically a poll of Army field commanders, all of whom were white. Given that era's overt, socially acceptable racial prejudice and intolerance directed at black Americans, it was hardly surprising that the War College study was as much a negative reaction to external political pressures for racial reform as it was an attempt to respond to the issue of readiness. The study contained numerous references to such political pressures on the War Department: "... The plan is believed to be eminently fair to both the negro and the white man. Political pressure should not be allowed to alter it."[6] As a political response, the study sought to minimize the potential employment of black soldiers who were presumably disrupting the military's cultural and social fabric.

The fact that incoming black soldiers had been deprived of adequate health care, education, and social acceptance as first

class citizens, did nothing to alter the study's implicit thesis of black inferiority (white supremacy). In the War College Study, none of these factors was offered in explanation for poor black performance; only black racial inferiority was offered as the explanation. Thus while ostensibly advocating the notion that black Americans had an obligation to serve, the study prescribed a vision of limited black service implicitly valued less than the unlimited service afforded to whites. According to this vision, no matter what remedies were applied to alleviate black health and education inadequacies, the fulfillment of military obligation by black citizens could never equal that of whites. Evidently the authors of this study placed higher value on preserving the traditional military social order with its white supremacist underpinnings than on maximizing America's manpower efficiency.

It is fair to conclude that the racism of the authors blinded them to any logical consideration of constitutional ideals, or their own convictions to core values. One might argue that they considered domestic and foreign credibility, however, the study presents no explicit evidence in support of that argument.

Nonetheless, the authors did cite poor education and health care as obstacles for its limited vision for employment of black soldiers as laborers ("pioneer troops"). This indirect acknowledgement of impediments to black mobilization would resound more strongly and with greater clarity in future studies.

**REPORT OF BOARD OFFICERS
ON UTILIZATION OF NEGRO MANPOWER IN THE POST-WAR ARMY,
(The Gillem Report)
dated 17 November 1945**

Purpose

By order of the Secretary of War, a board of three general

officers, chaired by Lieutenant General Alvan C. Gillem, Jr. was

charged to:

> Prepare a policy for the use of the
> authorized Negro manpower potential during
> the post-war period including the complete
> development of the means required to derive
> the maximum efficiency from the full
> authorized manpower of the nation in the
> event of a national emergency.[7]

Summary

The board was methodical and detailed in its approach. Its

investigation was focused, its conclusions had utility for Army

leadership and field commanders, and its progressive

recommendations were sensitive to both external political

sentiments and the Army's culture.

The Gillem Board sought answers to the following questions:

> 1. How shall Negro personnel be utilized in
> the Army in the event of another national
> emergency?
>
> 2. What basis of Negro personnel is
> necessary in the post-war Army in order to
> provide for rapid expansion in time of war?
>
> 3. What shall be the scope of the War
> Department General Staff and of subordinate
> commanders any policy adopted?
>
> 4. How shall authorized Negro personnel be

selected, processed, trained and assigned?

5. Shall changes in policy be adopted and promulgated immediately?[1]

The Gillem Board developed a basis for its conclusions upon fact, and constitutional ideals. It asserted that the nation's human resource was by definition limited and should therefore be used efficiently to ensure that every American, to include the Negro citizen, was afforded every opportunity to prepare for military service. This logically encouraged efforts to uplift the quality of the entire manpower pool which would implicitly raise the quality of all military inductees. The moral component of the board's argument stressed that the duty of all citizens to support the constitution mandated a military establishment committed to prepare the nation's qualified manpower, regardless of race, for effective employment in combat.

The board made good use of statistics linking good education and health care to the ability of Negro citizens to contribute. Board statistics clearly conveyed the regional differences in education, health care, and overall acceptance levels of Negro citizens within the country. The board asserted that improvements in black education translated into raised living standards, better health, a greater capacity to contribute, and eventually greater acceptance of black citizens. According to the board, "Negro progress and acceptance" was best exhibited in northern and western states. In the South where education was lacking, there was much less progress. The objective of the

board's focus was to buttress the argument for education as the key ingredient to uplifting manpower quality and to convey a sense of urgency for timely and resolute action by the military establishment to ride the tide of growing public acceptance of black citizens.

The board offered 25 conclusions which advocated a preference for organizing Negro combat units; the assignment of a larger proportion of officers to units with higher proportions of soldiers (regardless of race) in the two lower mental categories; and a continuation of existing on-post social arrangements regarding the administration of recreational and messing facilities and of officers club use. The conclusions acknowledged the military's failure to develop adequate plans for the use of Negro manpower subsequent to World War I, advocated establishment of a War Department General Staff Group for management of racial minority affairs; and, advocated a coordinated well publicized War Department policy for all services. Also among the conclusions:

> 3. Considering the advance made by the Negro civilian during the period between World War I and World War II and the increase in numbers available for military service, it is concluded that adequate plans were not prepared for the ultimate utilization of this manpower.

> 5. The experience gained in the utilization of the Negro manpower in two major wars lead to the definite conclusion that if remedial action is taken by the War Department at this time, many of the apparent deficiencies of the Negro soldier can be eliminated and more efficient results derived from this manpower in the future.

10. Creation of a War Department General
Staff Group of selected officers, experienced
in command, who can devote their entire time
to problems involving minority racial
elements in the military establishment is
necessary to insure adequate and continuous
coordination and cooperation in implementing
policy. Creation for the same purpose of a
similar group of staff of each major command
is necessary.

11. The War Department policy announced for
the administration and utilization of
minority groups in the post-war Army should
be carefully coordinated with policies of the
sister services to avoid conflicting
undertakings and to insure uniformity of
purpose.[9]

The overall thrust of the Gillem Board's policy
recommendations was to focus subtly on two issues:

o Ensure that progress in military race relations
matches that progress visible in the civilian sector.

o As a goal, employ Negro manpower to the extent
represented by the overall Negro population.

The Gillem Board offered the following broad policy
statement as its overarching recommendation:

Within proportions corresponding to those in
the civil population, to utilize the Negro
manpower in the post-was Army on a broader
professional scale than has obtained
heretofore and, through the medium of
installation and organizations, to facilitate
the development of leaders and specialists to
meet effectively the requirements of an
expanded war Army. (See Facts Bearing on the
Problem and Conclusions 1-5).[10]

The board supplemented this recommendation with 18 specific

implementation measure recommendations. The most profound

recommendation was the integration of Negro and white units at

regimental level; among the recommendations:

> 11. That experimental groupings of Negro
> units with white units in composite
> organizations be continued in the post-war
> Army. (See conclusion 19 and Tab G IX).
>
> 12. That initially Negro units of the post-
> war Army be stationed in localities where
> community attitudes are most favorable and in
> such strength as will not constitute an undue
> burden to the local civilian population.
> (See Conclusion 13 Tab G X).
>
> 15. That the War Department, concurrently
> with promulgation of the approved policy,
> take steps to insure the indoctrination of
> all ranks throughout the Service as to the
> necessity for an unreserved acceptance of the
> provisions of the policy. (See Conclusion 22
> and Tabs GXII - XIII).[11]

Commentary

In sharp contrast to the 1925 War College study, the Gillem

Board recommendations were highly progressive. This report

appeared to be less of a negative reaction to external political

pressure and more of an acceptance of that pressure within the

context of already an improving domestic racial climate. The

fact that these pressures contributed to a legitimate attempt to

enhance the nation's mobilization capacity made them all the more

acceptable. Clearly the American public was more receptive to

change and indeed this change was already in motion in the

northern and western states. The report conveyed the notion that

the military establishment was actually following rather than

leading a rising domestic trend. It might well be argued that

the military establishment was simply following the wind of rising public sentiment rather than purely espousing constitutional ideals.

In terms of mobilization improvements, this report again brought to the fore the importance of good education and health care as prime ingredients to effective mobilization and implicitly advocated a strong government role to uplift the quality of the entire manpower pool.

Although the Gillem Report was approved, it made little impact because of poor enforcement.

> Army officials, however, believed the recommendations too advanced and the proposed changes too rapid, and therefore ignored the report's major suggestions. In fact, the recommendations were premature. American society remained segregated and the majority still had to be convinced that integration was the best way. The Gillem Board understood this and urged adoption of an intensive education program to convince Army personnel, from top to bottom, of the wisdom of its limited integration policy. The result was *Army Talk 170*, a pamphlet on Negro soldiers. War Department Circular 76, 1947, required that "Commanders of all echelons ... insure indoctrination of all personnel, including officers, under their command by establishing a course of instruction based on WD Circular 124, 1946 and *Army Talk 170* ." The circular established that instruction would be completed within 7 training days and in not less than a 3 1/2 hour period.[12]

Not only did field commanders fail to support the Army's new policy, there was clear evidence that many commanders ignored it. According to a 1949 classified report by President Truman's Fahy Committee, none of the Gillem Board's major or minor

recommendations were fulfilled. With regard to efforts to
integrate black soldiers and airmen into white overhead units,
the results ranged from dismal to nonexistent. "... In the
overhead of the ... third Army ... there were 29 finance clerks,
and no Negroes, 37 white motion picture projectionist and no
Negroes, 478 white writers and no Negroes..." The committee went
on to assert "... The files of the historical records section
reveal no consistent enthusiasm for, and very often active
opposition to, any positive measures for implementing the
policies of the Gillem Board." The committee attributed much of
the blame to the Army's failure to establish a special staff
group to monitor the program in accordance with the Gillem Report
recommendations.[13]

Thus the Gillem Board Policies supporting limited
integration and equitable treatment of black soldiers and airmen
were basically circumvented throughout the field. Reluctance
manifested by foot-dragging is a kind characterization of this
response to a War Department directive. Again, prejudice within
the military leadership undermined the Constitutional ideal,
military core values, and force credibility.

**THE SEGREGATION OF NEGROES IN THE ARMY AIR FORCES
AIR COMMAND AND STAFF SCHOOL, AIR UNIVERSITY
(Author: Colonel Noel F. Parrish)
dated May 1947**

Purpose

This study authored by Colonel Noel F. Parrish examined the

contradictory policies regarding the employment of Negroes in the
Army Air Forces. Given that many of the policies resulted from
influences from the federal to local levels, recommendations
presented in this study were offered to effect greater Air Force
control over said policies.

Summary

Colonel Parrish, a former commander of the Tuskegee Army Air
Field, greatly disliked segregation. From his perspective,
segregation not only wasted resources with needless duplication,
it encouraged mediocrity by allowing less capable blacks and
whites to avoid competition. Regarding incompetent blacks:

> Incompetent Negroes are pleased by mass
> treatment and assignment since they do not
> then have to compete and are not blamed for
> individual failure but only for being a
> helpless part of a mediocre group.[14]

As for incompetent whites:

> An incompetent white commander or supervisor,
> while of course protesting against the
> assignment, can always try to cover up any
> deficiencies in leadership or ability by
> unscientific theorizing about "Negro
> characteristics" ad infinitum.[15]

Parrish's study, written after his testimony before the
Gillem Board, was basically a dissenting cry in the dark. In the
immediate post-war era he must have appeared outright radical.
Although Colonel Parrish was ignored, his arguments rang true.
He chastised the Air Force for its maintenance of separate Negro
and white units and its adherence to a decentralized approach to

racial policy which made a force-wide coherent policy impossible.
Parrish argued that the Air Force was wasting resources and
making the eventual transition to integration more difficult.

> ...Had the improvements come, not mainly as a
> result of outside pressure from Negroes and
> others, but because of the action of military
> leaders who grasped the deeper implications
> of this War, they would have been much
> greater and much more significant, not only
> to the Negro, but for the nation as a
> whole.[16]

Parrish based arguments upon the reality of demographics and
politics. His demographic argument asserted that there was an
inadequate skills base in the Negro population sector to support
the wide range of occupations required for any segregated "Negro
Air Force organization." It was clearly more efficient, he
argued, to combine Negro manpower assets with those of whites in
a single coherent Air Force. Furthermore the segregation policy
was politically untenable in light of emerging Navy and Coast
Guard policies which sanctioned elimination of all racial
barriers under circumstances identical to those of the Air Force.

Commentary

Inasmuch as this study was a Staff College thesis rather
than a formal proposal to Air Force leadership, it is
inappropriate to judge leadership's response. Given Colonel
Parrish's stature however, one could speculate that his thesis
might have been circulated within the Air Force leadership.

The Parrish study provided interesting insights regarding
differences in segregation customs among various southern

counties, racial myths, and race relations norms throughout the country all of which collectively underscored the futility of any coherent decentralized Air Force race relations policy. This study was certainly good food for thought for Air Force leadership.

INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES (ICAF) STUDY SR 48-59
TRAINING AND UTILIZATION OF MANPOWER
dated 12 April 1948

Purpose

This Industrial College study sought to gain an understanding of manpower mobilization problems and make recommendations for future mobilization efforts. As a study adjunct, great attention was afforded to the unique challenges of black mobilization.

Summary

The report presented an in-depth look at manpower mobilization, to include a detailed assessment of civilian preinduction training, developed a plan and argument for Universal Military Training (UMT), developed a process for manpower accession, documented the unique challenges associated with black mobilization, and presented conclusions and recommendations encompassing the same.

The report's summary was weighted heavily to "The Negro " segment: 27 of the summary's 48 paragraphs chronicled the American Negro experience from 1619 through 1946, and focused

upon black health, education, cultural, social, and economic status as the basis of black qualitative value to the nation's manpower pool. Key points:

o *Cultural, social, and economic*

- The American Negro evolved from the institution of slavery which destroyed African tribal identities and families.

- Eli Whitney's 1793 invention of the cotton gin provided the technological leap in cotton production that spawned the international cotton industry. The resulting demands for cheap manual labor so greatly expanded the African slave market that by 1860, there were 4,442,000 American Negroes representing 14.1% of the US population.

- The transition of the vast majority of blacks from slavery to freedom in 1865 was abrupt but incomplete. The slavery experience left the Negro unprepared for freedom's responsibilities. This was evidenced during Reconstruction when Negro political power quickly succumbed to political maneuvering of Northern industrialist via passage of the 1872 Amnesty Act and 1876 Reconciliation Act. These acts essentially reestablished the legal basis for white supremacy in the South to facilitate North-South commerce.

- With Negro civil rights and opportunities greater in the North, Negroes slowly became a more integral part of American life in that region of the country.

- Although the Negro population was growing between 1790 and

1940, it declined in relative terms. However, the relative
decline was projected to reverse so that by 1980 Negroes would
account for 12.4% of the population.

- Today the Negro continues to struggle to overcome
prejudice born in slavery, reinforced during Reconstruction, and
still widely accepted that asserts Negro inferiority. Both the
Negro and white segments of the population must collaborate in
the effort to combat prejudice. This will not be accomplished
with legislation alone as evidenced by the 13th, 14th, and 15th
amendments to the Constitution and recent Supreme Court
decisions.

- World War II created a period of national prosperity that
afforded Negroes opportunities throughout industry in a manner
that did not displace white workers. Despite this however, the
Negro remains a traditional low income group.

- Race relations and housing cannot be separated; both are
serious nation-wide problems. Non-whites occupy substandard
housing at twice the rate of whites as a result of discrimination
which limits housing availability.

- Equalization of opportunities for Negroes rather than
elimination of segregation is a more practical way to uplift
Negro education and health. This approach will tend to reduce
segregation on its own accord.

- Negro acceptance into northern unions should be handled on
a individual local community basis.

- To the detriment of national security, many Negro leaders

are using the Armed Forces as a medium to fight racial prejudice and segregation by forcing the nation to accept the vast uneducated Negro population. "The vast majority of American Negroes are so uneducated and underprivileged that they have developed traits of character that, in general disqualifies them for leadership and renders them ineffective as a unit in close combat. Their undesirable characteristics, which adversely affect their military value, are low standards of achievement, lack of pride in accomplishment, lack of sense of responsibility, low technical knowledge and skills, and the 'Uncle Tom' complex. Other serious obstacles to full utilization of the Negro in the Service are the attitudes, traditions, habits, and antipathies that exist between the white and Negro races."[17]

-The Armed Forces are already far ahead of the habits of the Nation in the utilization of Negro manpower.

o *Education*

- World War II Selective Service records indicate a low education level of American Negroes. Although rejection rates for educational deficiency were generally high throughout the nation, they were especially high among Negroes, and even higher among Southern Negroes. A separate report indicated that only 60% of the Negro population had five years of education compared to 92% of the white population.

- A high Negro rejection rate places disproportional demands upon the remainder of the population to mobilize during national

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emergency.

- There is a direct relationship to the Negro rejection rate from the Armed Forces and the general educational and cultural environment of the selectees.

- There is a great disparity between Negro and white educational opportunities which can be measured by comparing per pupil expenditures for schools on teachers' salaries, school property value, etc.

- Negro educational levels must be raised to prevent a large loss of effective manpower in time of national emergency. Since equalizing educational opportunities is cost prohibitive for states. Federal financial assistance appears to be the only plausible answer.

o Health

- Negro health standards are relatively low. The Negro death rate is 71% higher than whites. Tuberculosis and infant mortality are particularly harmful to the Negro.

- There exist three main reasons for poor Negro health: (1) lack of adequate medical facilities, (2) inadequate numbers of physicians and other medical personnel, and (3) ignorance, superstition, poor environment, and generally low standard of living.

- Federal aid is essential to provide adequate facilities immediately. Improving elementary and secondary school education is the best response to remedy the shortage of Negro doctors.

Midwife training is the best remedy for the high incidence of
Negro infant mortality in rural areas.

The report enumerated 37 black mobilization specific
conclusions; among them:

> 33. Racial prejudices, which result in
> discrimination, have been responsible in a
> large measure for the slow development of the
> Negro.
>
> 36. The need for adequate Negro housing is
> acute. Overcrowding of substandard
> facilities is particularly prevalent in the
> urban centers of population. There is a
> continuing need for more living space, more
> housing units, and better planned homes and
> neighborhoods.
>
> 39. During World War II, rejections for
> military service because of mental
> deficiencies and educational retardation were
> especially high among Negroes of the South
> because of low educational opportunities.
>
> 50. The main reasons for the low standards
> of Negro health are a lack of adequate
> medical facilities, hospitals, and clinics;
> an inadequate supply of physicians and other
> professional medical personnel; and
> ignorance, superstition, poor environment and
> a generally low standard of living.
>
> 62. Because of environment, the average
> American Negro has certain undesirable
> characteristics which, in general, disqualify
> him for leadership in close combat.
>
> 63. Certain habits, attitudes, traditions
> and antipathies that exist between white and
> Negro races prevent full utilization of the
> Negro in the Armed Forces.[18]

Study recommendations "Pertaining to the Negro":

> 15. The Secretary of Defense prepare a
> report for submission to the Chairman of the
> National Security Resources Board outlining
> the need for raising the general health and

educational level of the American Negro in
order that his maximum utilization in time of
national emergency may be realized.

16. The Armed Forces not be influenced by
political pressure of Negro leadership which
has a goal secondary to, and which may be
detrimental to, national security.

17. The present policies of each of the
three Services be continued, subject to such
modification in the future as may be
practicable based on the rising level of
public acceptance of the Negro.[19]

Commentary

More than any other, this Industrial College study detailed
the obstacles to black mobilization. Despite this, however, the
study offered little in terms of remedies by the Armed Forces to
meet those challenges. The study recommendations clearly
espoused a position for the military that sequenced racial
relations policy change within the military after social change
in the society at large. Basically the recommendations asserted
that:

o It was a federal government resource problem to
address the underlying problems of inadequate black education,
health care, and housing which deprived blacks of individual
competitive tools.

o It was counter to the national security interest to
be influenced by black political groups advocating policies which
implicitly valued social progress above national security
considerations.

o Current service policies should continue, subject to

change based upon rising level of public acceptance of the Negro.

In terms of the three policy dynamics, the ICAF study addressed all three in theory only. According to this study it was wrong that racism had deprived blacks of education, health, and socioeconomic progress. It was also wrong that this had the effect of denying blacks the opportunity to serve as well as the opportunity for group acceptance through military service. According to the study's logic, all of these negative were the results of faults in the society which victimized the military as much as it did blacks. Fix society, wrote the authors, and you will fix the military. In theory, the ICAF study supported the concepts of constitutional ideal, core values, and credibility. In practice it discarded all three by theoretically separating the military from society. By advocating a no-change manpower policy for the military, the ICAF study simply justified continuing traditional policies which helped to sustain the American status quo it criticized.

DETERMINATION OF POLICIES FOR UTILIZATION OF NEGRO MANPOWER IN THE U.S. AIR FORCE AIR COMMAND AND STAFF SCHOOL OF THE AIR UNIVERSITY
dated November 1949

Purpose

This study investigated all factors bearing on utilization of Negro manpower in the Air Force and made recommendations for appropriate Air Force policy. Sense of urgency and purpose is captured in the study's opening paragraph:

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Enlightened public interest in the proper
treatment of minority groups in the United
States is forcing the hand of leaders and
planners today. The issue, of racial
discrimination, has had its repercussions in
the military establishment, and reinforced by
the prospect of a future manpower shortage,
it has created an immediate requirement for
military planners. This requirement simply
stated is to: (1) make a thorough and
comprehensive study of the present status of
minority groups, (2) determine the ultimate
potentialities of these groups and (3) affect
plans for an early realization of those
potentialities for the Armed Forces.[20]

Summary

The study offered a snapshot assessment of Air Force race

relations as a derivative of the prevailing national racial

sentiment. This assessment was based upon previous studies,

comparisons of Negro and white health and welfare conditions, and

attitudinal survey. Conclusions and recommendations sought to

provide a policy basis to enhance Air Force manpower efficiency.

More idealistic possibilities
notwithstanding, the primary motivating
factor in conducting this particular study is
the realization of a need for maximum
strength in the Air Force NOW and in the
immediate foreseeable future. Organized
endeavor is no more than the sum of
individual endeavors; therefore, the
potentialities of a group which at present
makes up 10% of our total population must not
be overlooked.[21]

The study conclusion and recommendation criteria was based

upon acceptance of: (1) the implicit complexity of the problem,

(2) the need for unbiased attitude as a prerequisite for

intelligent thinking, (3) the need for solutions based upon

"moral worth", reflecting (4) "national spirit", and (5) "compatible with sound leadership practices."[22]

As with previous studies, much attention was focused upon comparisons of health and welfare demographic comparisons between Negro and white populations:

o _Income_. Negroes were consistently poorer than whites throughout the country. "...As a farmer, he has been kept in a dependent position and has been exploited. As a city worker he has been kept out of jobs, especially the good ones."[23]

o _Housing_. Negroes consistently lived in substandard housing at a much higher rate than whites throughout the country. "...Consider the moral, mental, and physical health hazards these overcrowded living conditions produce and you are beginning to grasp the real 'why' of the Negroes' conduct and attitude."[24]

o _Life Expectancy_. The importance of environment and availability of physicians was underscored. On environment: "Expectation of life at birth in the United States according to Metropolitan Life Insurance was 48.23 years for white males as compared to 32.54 years for colored males in 1900. This has risen to 64.44 for white males as compared to 56.06 for colored males, in 1945. This very decided gain for the colored rate over the white rate supports the theory concerning influence of environment."[25] On physicians: "Negro professional medical personnel is scant in comparison to the population. It is accepted as minimum standard of safety that there should be one

physician to 1500 population. In 1942 the proportion of Negro physicians to the Negro population was one to 3377."[26]

o *Sanitation and Disease*. "Most of the diseases which afflict the Negro are those in which poverty and a lack of health education and medical care play a great part. The Negro mortality rate form tuberculosis is about three times that of whites, from syphilis more than six times as great. Death rates from other major causes-- maternal and child ills, heart disease, pneumonia-- are in many cases ten times higher for Negroes than whites.[27] ...Low income whites have about the same health problems as low income Negroes and the same comparison holds true for the higher wage brackets..."[28]

o *Heredity and Susceptibility to Disease*. "Heredity evidently has little to do with death rate among Negroes. All evidence shows death rates vary directly with changes in educational and economic status."[29]

o *Venereal Disease Control*. "Venereal disease has always been much more prevalent among Negroes than white troops. Negro troops representing 11% total strength of the Army accounted for about half of all the venereal disease in the Army during 1945."[30] The study recommended solutions which directly paralleled those for white troops: effective cooperation from the local civilian community, development of recreational facilities and improved educational techniques."[31]

o *Psychic Traits*. The study adopted Klineberg's conclusions from *Characteristics of the American Negro* in

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asserting that past studies and tests of Negro intelligence were flawed by interpretation problems influenced by such variables as schooling, motivation, rapport, cultural background and experience.[32]

o _Skill Potential_. While basically acknowledging Negro contributions in past wars, the study also underscored disparities in mental test scores between Negro and white soldiers. The study suggested that the rapid improvement in Negro test scores relative to those of white soldiers between the two world wars probably reflected improvements in Negro educational opportunities.

The study built its basis for conclusions and recommendations by synthesizing the results of attitudinal survey and moral logic. A sampling of the study's moral arguments:

> Negroes have been notably a loyal and
> patriotic group. One of their outstanding
> characteristics is the single-mindedness of
> their patriotism. They have no other country
> to which they owe or feel any degree of
> allegiance. They have neither the cultural
> or economic ties with kindred in any other
> lands.[33]

> Negroes have fought in every American war
> from the Revolution to World War II. A long
> tradition of military service in America and
> abroad has been built up by Negroes.[34]

A sampling of attitudinal survey presumably taken after experimental integration of blacks and whites at the company level during World War II. Specifically, Negro and white platoons were organized within a single company.

> QUESTION: Has your feeling changed since

having served in the same units with colored soldiers?[35]

77% of white officers and 77% of white noncommissioned officers

(NCOs) responded "yes, have become more favorable toward them

(feel more respect for them, etc.), (No cases were found to

report unfavorable)."[36]

> QUESTION: With the same Army training how do
> you think colored troops compare with white
> troops as infantry soldiers?[37]

The white officer/white NCO response: "Not as good" (5%/4%);

"Same" (69%/83%); "Better than white" (17%/9%)."[38]

The remaining survey responses likewise supported the case

for integration. A compelling "fox hole" argument for

integration was thus offered:

> ...It has been said that there are no
> atheists in fox holes. As indicated by this
> research questionnaire, it seems equally
> apparent that 'Jim Crow' does not inhabit
> these fox holes.[39]

The study strongly suggested a much lower resistance level

to integration at the troop level than was widely accepted. With

equal importance the study exposed senior leadership as the more

potent obstacle to change:

> ...Thus far, much lip service has been given
> but no all-out effort has been forthcoming.
> As evidence we have only to note the
> conspicuous absence of favorable publicity
> for our colored soldiers or the colored race.
> As a recent example, refer to 1 October 1949
> issue of Air Force Times. In this issue the
> only 'publicity' to be found is a closeup
> picture from behind, only the heads visible.
> The caption reads 'PEEKIN' PICKANINNIES' peer
> from behind the ...' Ask yourself how many
> times you have seen or heard the Negro

portrayed in literature, the movies, or radio
as any thing but a sycophant, a fool or a
buffoon, and you have an important phase of
the problem in a nutshell.[40]

The study recommendation and conclusions were profound.
Among other things it recommended the procurement of more Negro
officers "... to address the human relations problem caused by
the Negro Airman-white officer gap."[41] The key conclusions and
recommendations are summarized below:[42]

o Elimination of discrimination against the Negro.

o The Air Force should take the lead in social reform.

o The Negro's ultimate potential should be considered
as being equal to that of a white soldier.

o Given the nation's manpower shortage, and the
Negro's demonstrated patriotism and competence in past wars, it
is imperative to maximize utilization of this significant portion
of the population.

o Conditions are favorable for integration.
Experience demonstrates that white Airmen tend to respect the
Negro soldier with closer association, especially in combat
units.

o The personnel problems associated with Negro Airmen
are not unlike those of white Airmen.

Commentary

Although this study had no documented impact on Air Force
policy it did capture the state of Air Force race relations it
the late 40's. Consistent with previous studies education and

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health care were cited as major obstacles to the progress of black service members.

In contrast to the ICAF study, this one did advocate policy changes that afforded the military an active role.

**AN ANALYSIS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN THE AIR FORCE
AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE
(Author: William T. Fuller, Jr.)
May 1972**

Purpose

This study investigated the basic causes and effects of racial discrimination in the United States Air Force and offered policy improvement recommendations.

Summary

This study offers one student's assessment of Air Force race relations during the post-World War II-Vietnam era period. It focused upon evaluating and improving existing Air Force race relations. The author, Major William T. Fuller, looked at four 1972 Air Force programs:[43]

    o *Human Relations Education*. This was basically institutional race relations training for initial entry airmen and officers, as well senior Air Force schools which provided education on Air Force race relations policy to include redress mechanisms training for Air Force minorities.

    o *Open Forum Discussions*. The intent of these programs was to promote communication between the races. Horizontal

communications was enhanced through peer groups such as the
Brotherhood Association of Military Airmen (BAMA), which promoted
racial harmony. Vertical communications was enhanced through
open door policies, hot lines, and rap sessions, which
accelerated information from the bottom to the top and vice
versa.

o *Human Relations Councils*. These were base level
organizations chaired by the base equal opportunity officer and
composed of minority group members from the entire base. The
councils investigated racial discrimination complaints, reported
to the base commander, and could recommend action against anyone
who discriminated.

o *Defense Race Relations Institute (DRRI)*. This school
developed race relations doctrine and trained race relations
officers and noncommissioned officers to assist commanders in the
development of race relations programs in support of Department
of Defense race relations policy.

In his analysis of the causes for polarization, Fuller
struck a familiar chord. On the education disparity between
black and white airmen:

> ...For the most part, the black enlistee is
> the product of either the rural 'de jure'
> segregated southern school system or the "de
> facto" segregated ghetto school system of the
> northern cities. In both cases the quality
> of education is not on an equal par with that
> available to his white contemporary.[44]

> ... It seems obvious that many of these
> individuals recruited into the Air Force lack
> the educational background to compete
> effectively with their peers and that this

inability to compete for promotion could lead
to frustration and possible dissension.[45]

While praising each program as a step in the right
direction, Fuller highlighted a number of deficiencies.

o Human relations councils required more command
support. The fact that they functioned outside normal command
chain caused resentment among commanders. Fuller argued that
council findings and recommendations must be accomplished for the
councils to sustain credibility.

o Although DRRI was a good start, Fuller argued for a
more aggressive approach. "Soul Nights," interracial rooming,
etc. represent strategies that bring race relations to a more
personal level. Similarly programs which address institutional
deficiencies such as Security Police harassment, disparities in
non-judicial punishment, and double standards in enforcement of
regulations and performance reports were offered as strategies.

Building upon a viable an Air Force policy which was
basically in-place Fuller recommended 17 actions which compelled
greater commander involvement up and down the Air Force command
hierarchy. Typical of these recommendations:[46]

> That unit commanders and first sergeants be
> assisted by the equal opportunity
> representatives to insure that all problems
> concerned with race relations are solved at
> the lowest possible level.[47]

> That educational counselling should be
> provided to accommodate all Air Force
> personnel. This proposal is based on the
> recognition that in our society, education
> has been and still is the traditional way of
> providing upward promotional and economic
> mobility.[48]

That the OER/APR be revised to include
specific comments to evaluate an individual's
attitude toward race relations issues.[49]

Commentary

Major Fuller's study serves as an excellent benchmark.
By 1972 the Defense hierarchy was no longer resisting efforts at
integration but was truly focused upon maximum efficiency and
effectiveness of U.S. military manpower. Public pronouncements
by Robert C. Seamans, Jr., Secretary of the Air Force made this
point clear.

There isn't any question that over the years
there really has not been equal opportunity,
and you can see in certain parts of our
country, both in North and South, where
blacks and other minorities have not had the
educational opportunities, and this has
tended to, I would say, stunt the growth of
minority people, so, they really have not had
the same chance that others have. Our job
now is to see that, in the Air Force, they do
have opportunities.[50]

...that we have to be more efficient than
ever before, because the cost of preparedness
and readiness has escalated to the point that
we simply can't afford to waste human or
material resources. These resources are
wasted when real or imagined 'people
problems' are allowed to persist and to
effect our productivity.[51]

Consistent with previous studies, Fuller deduced that
education disparities between black and white airmen translated
into performance disparities which were a contributing factor to
disharmony. The resulting performance disparity reinforced the
old stereotypes, polarized the force, and thus disrupted unit
cohesion. Hence there was a need for race relations education

and communications strategies to reunite the force.

BLACKS AND THE MILITARY
Brookings Institution Study
dated 1982

Purpose

This study focused upon the controversy of black over representation in the military. The study authors did not seek resolution of issues surrounding the controversy. Rather they chose "to draw the issues, to present available evidence, to identify gaps in our knowledge, to stimulate further research, and to promote informed debate."[52]

Summary

The change in context between this and previous eras is striking. After gaining formal acceptance into the military, and enduring the growing pains of integration, black service members found themselves victims of their own success. The Department of Defense concern shifted from concerns of adequate black representation in the military to concerns of black over-representation. In 1982 the United States volunteer military was 20% black from a population base that was only 11% black.[53] While the social implications of black access to main stream America via the military was laudable, the probability that blacks would endure one third of the nation's war casualties in the opening days of hostilities was a source of considerable moral and ethical concern. Moreover there were a myriad of

related concerns: Could a military, composed substantially of members not from the mainstream, sustain support from mainstream America? Would decision makers be more or less inclined to place a military in harm's way absent any concern from their mainstream constituents?. Could a high-tech military be adequately sustained when substantially manned by those from the lower tiers of the social-economic ladder. Those who by definition had less education, skills, and immediate-use potential than those from America's mainstream? Clearly segregation and denial of military service to blacks had given way to economic conscription of poor blacks and others. In light of these considerations and Brezhnev's modernized Soviet military machine, the concerns of our defense leaders appeared warranted.

The Brookings study framed a yet broader issue --- the "appropriate concept of military service in contemporary American society."[54] Specifically, should military service be a obligation shared by all its citizens via a draft, or should military service be a professional enterprise force influenced by job marketplace supply and demand?

Commentary

Predictably, the Brookings study raised more issues and questions than it resolved. With convincing statistics, the study basically conveys the notion that the American military had grown less effective through its reliance upon the market place for manning.

In retrospect we see in 1993 that the effectiveness shortcomings were indeed corrected by more recruiting dollars and a commitment to attract those farther up the social-economic ladder. Certainly Desert Storm put to rest any concerns about the ability of a volunteer military to attract manpower in adequate quantity and quality. However, given the probability that our Post-Cold War military strategy will rely much more upon volunteer reserve formations, with human potential tied much closer to our civilian manpower pool, we ought not apply our Desert Storm solution to future challenges. It is probable that our post-Cold War economy will be less able to support the education and health investments in human capital. If this is the case, the prognosis for mobilizing all Americans is a matter of greater concern today than a decade ago. This study simply reminds us again that it will be more difficult to mobilize black Americans than members of the mainstream.

Not surprisingly this study also points to black education and health deficiencies as the major sources of national distress. These twin problems are, of course, linked closely to family and social environment, which are linked to politics. This more than any other factor ensures that they have no simple solutions.

III- LINKING PAST AND PRESENT

Historically unique obstacles aside, with the exception of

the nonobjective 1925 War College Study, all other previous studies clearly convey that:

o Black Americans have always been available to serve America in time of war for reasons of patriotism, pursuit of upward socioeconomic mobility, general conscription, and economic conscription. These motives and reasons are identical to those of mainstream America.

o Black Americans acquitted themselves as well as their mainstream counterparts during America's wars.

That aside, it's fitting to revisit this study's underlying questions and summarize a suitable response within the context of those factors affecting American Military manpower policy.

* *What unique obstacles historically impeded black mobilization?*

o Black Americans have indeed experienced unique obstacles during mobilization. These obstacles of inadequate education, health care, and social opportunity were then, and remain today, unique products of America's social discord. To the extent that the military will require the services of "economic conscripts", the black underclass will pose mobilization challenges identical to those of the past --- physical fitness and trainablity.

* *How did the American Military address these the unique
obstacles?*

Over time the military's policy response to black
mobilization obstacles has evolved from reluctant, to heroic, to
job market fine-tuned. Again, the changing nature of this
response reflects the changing dynamics of balancing the nation's
constitutional ideals, the military's core values, and force
credibility.

o *The Reluctant 40's and 50's*

Prior to and immediately following President Truman's
issuance of Executive Order 9981 the aggregate of military
service policies to employ black manpower can be characterized as
reluctant manifested by foot-dragging. It was inevitable that
after mobilizing its citizens to fight Hitler's racial and
ethnic tyranny in Europe, America would have to eradicate
domestic racial and ethnic bias as a moral precondition for
assumption of Free World leadership against communism.
Nonetheless the constitutional ideal which supported the notion
that every citizen's obligation to serve and thereby "earn" the
rights of liberty and societal acceptance, as well as the
military core value of selfless citizen service, were apparently
outweighed by the credibility dynamic. This suggests that post
World War II military leadership had little appreciation for past
military contributions of black Americans, or confidence in

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future black performance, and placed greater importance upon maintaining credibility with the American mainstream, our allies, and potential adversaries than upon constitutional ideals or its own core values.

o The Heroic 60s and Early-70s

The Civil Rights Movement and the unpopular Vietnam War with its anti-draft movement component altered the dynamics of the military's racial policy balancing act. By the mid sixties, mainstream America, which strongly supported the era's active Civil Rights Movement, virtually mandated an aggressive military race relations policy intolerant of internal or traditional regional discriminatory practices against black service members. This in concert with America's continuing need for a foreign policy based firmly upon the moral high ground, brought all three factors of constitutional ideal, military core values, and credibility into strong convergence. A cursory glance at military off-post housing and off-limits policies of the mid 60's supports this assertion.

The dynamics would shift again by the late 60's as active mainstream support for the Vietnam War and the draft nosedived. The very visible and active anti-Vietnam and anti-draft movements greatly disrupted domestic peace and foreign policy alike. Although strongly espoused within the military, the constitutional ideals of obligation to serve and the core military value of selfless citizen service or patriotism, was not

actively supported by the mainstream America. Credibility was, of course, linked to perceived battlefield failures. The fact that the military won the vast majority of battles and engagements was meaningless in the absence of achieving any successful political resolution of the war. President Nixon was elected in 1968 based upon his pledge to disengage the country from the Vietnam War. The war and draft ended in 1973. The Vietnam legacy severely eroded the foreign and domestic credibility of the American military.

o Post-Vietnam Doldrums

The race relations policy for the new All-Volunteer Military initially took the route of least resistance --- "economic conscription" arrived. Deserted by America's mainstream, the military absorbed the underclass in disproportionately high numbers. To nobody's great surprise blacks were over-represented in this population. Public concern for the American Military lay dormant until the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan generated renewed concern. This set the stage for "fine-tuning" of the 80's.

o The Finely-Tuned 80's

The military's emergence from the Vietnam doldrums began with President Carter's build-up and was greatly accelerated under President Reagan. The military hardware and construction buildup was complimented by a focus upon manpower quality

unequalled in our history. America's high-tech military would be manned by high quality soldiers, airmen, and sailors, and marines. The men and women who made up this all-volunteer force would be attracted by patriotism, and opportunities for economic and social upward mobility and post-retirement security. Specifically in exchange for their military service these high tech warriors would receive educational, and medical benefits, as well as the prospect for lifetime security after a 20 year retirement. With regard to the racial policy balancing act, the "Reagan Revival" breathed new life into the constitutional ideal of military service as an obligation and greatly complemented the military core value of patriotic service. Credibility was sustained by manning a volunteer military which reflected America's mainstream enough to alleviate the need for a draft. Racial proportionality was managed by raising entrance test score requirements. Blacks, most of whom were underclass tended to score lower on these tests than their white counterparts who had better opportunities for education. On the basis of these tests, the privilege to serve was denied to many black applicants. The age of fine-tuning arrived.

o Post-Cold War

America's growing inability to sustain standards of education and health in general does not bode well for a military increasingly dependent upon "economic conscripts" of all colors.

An emerging Post-Cold War strategy which seems to place increased reliance upon reserve forces underscores this.

> During my seven years in the Department [of Defense] it seemed to me that those vast resources could contribute to the attack on our tormenting social problems...in the end, poverty and social injustice may endanger our national security as much as any military threat.
> -Robert S. McNamara[55]

Is it possible that the dynamics of American social and economic change jeopardizing our security? The lack of any visible Cold War threat naturally diminishes the constitutional ideal of service obligation and does little to sustain the core military value of patriotic service. Force credibility derived in-part by race and class fine-tuning of a smaller active force may vanish during a contingency supported by our not-so-fine-tuned reserve forces. Intuitively we can all appreciate the fact that security from external threat is meaningless without security from internal threats as well. What is striking today is that the historic obstacles to black mobilization are no longer unique to blacks, but are now linked to an expanding multi-racial American underclass. The fact that we now find our external security linked to the plight of the American underclass at a time when we appear less able to improve their condition is all the more troublesome. The answer to our mobilization challenge, black and otherwise, may very well be encompassed in a political-social solution which employs the American military as a model for the American society at large.

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