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# President's Committee on the Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Forces

FOR RELEASE:

Rep. Jacob K. Javits (Rep-Lib, New York)

Thursday (January 12, 1950) P.M. and  
Friday (January 13, 1950) A. M. Papers

Representative Jacob K. Javits (R-L, NY) today introduced a resolution calling for a Select Committee to investigate segregation and discrimination on grounds of race, creed, color or national origin in the armed services. The resolution calls for a special committee of nineteen to be appointed by the Speaker from the legislative committees on Armed Services, Education and Labor, Foreign Affairs and Expenditures in the Executive Departments. A report by the special committee is required not later than June 1, 1950.

In introducing the resolution, Mr. Javits said: "The Navy, the Air Force and the Army have each developed separate policies respecting the question of segregation and discrimination in response to the President's Executive Order of July 26, 1948 and to the directive of the Secretary of Defense of April 6, 1949. Persistent charges have been made that practices of segregation and discrimination continue in the Army. Nothing could be more useful as propaganda material to the Communist propagandists in the 'cold war.' During my recent visit to Europe with the European Study Mission of the Foreign Affairs Committee, both in Germany (which is a main front of the cold war) and the other western democracies, I was impressed by the questioning of people in all walks of life about our race relations policies and about segregation and discrimination in employment, housing, and education, and in the armed services. The Communist propagandists in Western Germany and Western Europe seek to build up the alleged evils and to magnify them, but there is enough to them to damage us seriously in the cold war. I so advised the Secretary of Defense on December 22 in announcing that I would introduce this resolution. The situation among the peoples of Asia and Africa is even worse. With Communist China as a propaganda base, segregation and discrimination on grounds of race, creed or color in the United States can be used to win tens of millions to the Communist cause."

"The least which is required," Congressman Javits continued, "is a complete hearing of the facts. Certainly our constitutional democracy cannot tolerate discrimination of segregation among men who wear the uniform of the United States and are sworn to uphold its national security at the cost of their very lives. Good faith with respect to a civil rights program requires nothing less than an investigation such as this. Civil rights must be the subject of bi-partisan policy if effective action is to be had and this would be the first step toward that goal. It is difficult to see how at least such an investigation can be refused by the Congressional leadership consistent with the President's civil rights stand. The question has

become one relative to the foreign policy of the United States as well as to the economy and efficiency of administration of the Department of Defense and the general policies of equality of opportunity in the United States. Hence I have proposed that the standing committees charged with these responsibilities respectively contribute to the special committee. The investigation needs to include all these questions."