

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 4, 1957

MEMORANDUM TO: The Honorable Sherman Adams

After the visit of Mrs. Whitelaw Reid, you asked me to give consideration to, and subsequently write, a memorandum on the repeated requests from Negro leaders that the President confer with them on the many domestic problems plaguing the race at this time. Specifically, over a period of more than a year, A. Philip Randolph and Reverend Martin Luther King have made representation to the White House for an audience with the President.

*no record
sent to files
as of 6/10/57*

I can state categorically that the rank and file of Negroes in the country feel that the President has deserted them in their current fight to achieve first-class citizenship via Civil Rights legislation, etc. Despite the unprecedented record of this Administration in the field of human rights, Negroes are so emotionally involved in this struggle that they are unable to estimate what gains have been made. I can understand this feeling, and it is only because I am a staff member of the Administration and have been an eye witness to its efforts that I can look at these protests objectively rather than emotionally.

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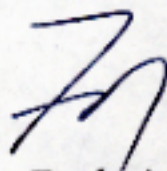
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There is tremendous unrest in the country among the Negro population. Tensions are great, emotions are at a high pitch, and the time is approaching when peaceful resistance and oratory may give way to efforts not conducive to the welfare of our country. I feel the time is ripe for the President to see two or three outstanding Negro leaders, and to let them get off their chests the

things that seem to be giving them great concern. I feel the psychology of the President seeing these men will have a great effect upon the morale, sentiments and attitudes of Negro citizens. Their present feeling is that their acknowledged leadership is being ignored, snubbed, and belittled by the President and his staff. Even though we may be aware of what these men will say when they meet the President, it is important that they be able to meet him and say it face to face.

In all my trips and speeches about the country, my greatest difficulty is convincing people during the question and answer period that the Administration is sincere in its attitude on Civil Rights. Even in the predominantly white audience in Minneapolis at the Republican Workshop three weeks ago, the questions from the floor were on the matter of the President's refusal to see the Negro leaders and to assure them of his interest in their problem.

If the President will consent to see Messrs. King, Randolph and ^{Ray} Wilkins at the same time, I think Max and I can work out the details of a visit and brief these men on protocol before the meeting, so that the meeting will shed light and not head on this difficult question.



E. Frederic Morrow