

# **DEFENSE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE**

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## **Shades of Black, White, and Gray: News Media Coverage of the Armed Forces Equal Opportunity Survey**

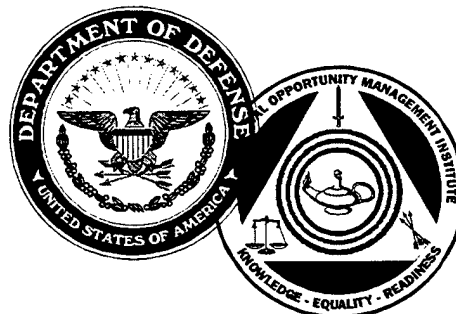
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News Media Coverage of the  
Armed Forces Equal Opportunity Survey**

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**Abstract**

The Department of Defense (DoD) on November 23, 1999 released two reports dealing with equal opportunity in the United States military services. One study, the *Armed Forces Equal Opportunity Survey*, provided information on the perceptions of equal opportunity and treatment of active duty Service members and the other, *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers*, examined equal opportunity in recruiting, commissioning, training, assigning, evaluating, promoting, and retaining active duty members. After discussing an overview of the reports, some background on racism, the roles of the press, and journalistic values, this study turns to a content analysis. This paper presents an examination of how news media reported available information and what commentaries were generated by the DoD studies. Expected results were that journalists would emphasize some points of the survey while neglecting others, and reporting in most cases would be rather superficial, compared to the amount of information available to reporters. Various stories and commentaries are quoted as examples. Portions of the report that could have been emphasized, but were not are pointed out in the discussion.

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Opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and should not be construed to represent the official position of DEOMI, the military Services, or the Department of Defense.

# **Shades of Black, White and Gray: News Media Coverage of the Armed Forces Equal Opportunity Survey**

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## **Introduction**

The Department of Defense (DoD) on November 23, 1999 released two reports dealing with equal opportunity in the United States military Services. One study reported the results of a large-scale survey of military personnel, and the other examined the career progression of minority and women active duty officers.

In its executive summary, the *Armed Forces Equal Opportunity Survey* (AFEOS) was referred to as the "first of its kind. No survey of this magnitude and level of detail has ever been undertaken to assess active duty Service members' perceptions of fair treatment and equal opportunity (EO)." Survey results would be used to inform and assist DoD leaders as they work to ensure equal opportunity for all (Scarville, et. al., 1999). Instruments such as this survey will help provide information needed to understand the state of equal opportunity, as well as assist in policy choices to achieve and maintain equal opportunity, according to the "Challenges Ahead" section of the executive summary.

The survey was conducted by the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) from September 1996 through February 1997. The 16-page questionnaire contains 81 questions, many with multiple parts. It was mailed to 76,754 Service members, both enlisted personnel and officers up to grade O-6. Respondents were asked about their perceptions and experiences related to equal opportunity. Response rate was 53 percent.

Overall, the AFEOS found major differences in the perception of Service members of different racial/ethnic groups. One finding is that White members are more positive than minority members about racial/ethnic issues in the military (Scarville, et. al. , 1999). The document is filled with interesting, informative material, including a chronology of "watershed events" in military equal opportunity dating from 1948 to 1990.

On July 26, 1948, President Truman issued Executive Order 9981 stating, "there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed Services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin. This policy shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible" (Wolk, 1998). Truman directed creation of the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services (also known as the Fahy Committee), "to examine into the rules, procedures, and practices in order to determine in what respect such rules, procedures,

and practices may be altered or improved with a view to carrying out the policy of this order" (Wolk, 1998). Truman's action ended segregated units in the military.

Six chapters of the AFEOS deal with race and ethnic interrelationships, personal experiences related to race/ethnicity, bothersome situations, promoting EO climate, and perceptions of opportunity and global attitudes. Numerous charts, graphs, and figures appear throughout the report.

Large majorities of members of all races indicated having positive personal and social interactions with members of other racial and ethnic groups. A majority of all racial/ethnic groups reported that military life was as good or better than civilian life in areas such as fair performance evaluations, freedom from harassment and hate crimes, and freedom from discrimination. Many Service members indicated experiencing "offensive encounters" based on race or ethnicity. A small percentage reported threats or harm or vandalized property because of race/ethnicity. Overall, relatively small percentages of members in each racial/ethnic group said they experienced an incident of harassment and discrimination related to the military personnel lifecycle. Blacks and Hispanics, however, were much more likely than Whites to experience such incidents, the survey stated. Some Service members reported that they had received training on racial/ethnic harassment and discrimination but they had not reported "bothersome" situations. Some respondents indicated that they believed that nothing would be done or that the situation was not important enough to report.

Chapter 1 of the AFEOS provides background information about race relations within the military and perceptions about discrimination. According to the report, Whites consistently have been more optimistic than Blacks regarding the achievement of racial equality. On the other hand, Blacks have been more likely than Whites to indicate the continuing presence of racial discrimination (Hochschild, 1995). "While the U.S. Army has been relatively successful in integrating racial minorities at the institutional level, it has not been as successful in affecting the racial attitudes and perceptions of active-duty men and women. There is evidence that racial minorities on active duty in today's Army perceive the equal opportunity to be less favorable than do White active-duty members," wrote Moore (1999). Riedel (1998) wrote that women in the military are significantly more likely to report having personally experienced some type of discrimination compared to men, minorities report more discrimination than the majority, and enlisted personnel report being discriminated against more than officers.

A so-called "racial divide" has existed in the United States ever since the first Black slaves came to America. In 1835, French visitor Alexis de Tocqueville observed in *Democracy in America* that Blacks and Whites were "two foreign communities." Swedish scholar Gunnar Myrdal in 1944 argued in *An American Dilemma* that Blacks could not escape the caste system into which they were born. The general public now is seemingly divided along more racial lines, Parrillo wrote. Many Whites believe that a level playing field now exists -- thanks to changed attitudes, enlightenment, and laws -- or that an uneven playing field tilted in favor of minorities exists. Many African Americans believe systemic racism still permeates all social institutions and everyday life (Parrillo, 1997).

Although overt expressions of prejudice have declined steadily and significantly over time, subtle -- often unconscious and unintentional -- forms continue to exist, Dovidio reported. "Aversive racism, like more blatant forms, may contribute to the restriction of opportunity for Blacks and other minorities" (Dovidio, 1999). The majority of Blacks in America today have a profound distrust for the police and legal system, and about a third are overtly distrustful of Whites, he wrote. Dovidio stated that within the government, 55 percent of Blacks and 28 percent of Hispanics reported that they believe that discrimination hinders their career advancement, according to U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board 1997 figures.

After examining four models of racism -- aversive, symbolic, modern and traditional -- Johnson (1997) wrote that subtle racism has negative consequences for both racial minorities and majority group members. "On the one hand, subtle racism creates obstacles to advancement for one set of organization members; on the other hand, it contributes to discontentment among another set of members. Both outcomes are detrimental to efforts to create an equal opportunity climate," she wrote. "In essence, individual attitudes translate into behaviors that yield disparate career experiences for racial minorities and majorities." She wrote that attention must be given to the attitudes of the individuals that comprise the organization in addition to aspects of the organization itself.

Moskos and Butler (1996) found that White and Black Service members had different perceptions of equal opportunity. "As in virtually all areas of American life, in the Army, Blacks see more racial discrimination than Whites, but differences in perception are much smaller in the Army than in civilian life. Black soldiers are twice as likely as Whites to discern racial discrimination in the Army," they wrote. This statement agreed with Dansby and Landis (1991), who found that Blacks were more likely than Whites to perceive discrimination against minorities. One journalist wrote that, "what military personnel think the Services have done in their 47-year effort at integration depends on a Service member's rank, sex, and skin color" (Graham, 1995).

In 1994, a House Task Force reported that a significant number of interviewees said there was an "erosion of awareness and sensitivity relative to racial matters over the past 5 to 10 years" (Hall, 1999). Air Force *Times* writer Neff Hudson was quoted by Hall: "After nearly four decades of official integration of the services, and despite Clinton's rosy words, there is still nothing approaching a consensus of how to fight racial and gender bias in the military." Other conclusions Hall quoted: "Whites have a rosier picture of the military than people of color . . . White male officers have the most positive view of life in uniform. . . . Two groups -- minority female officers and minority female enlisted members -- rate the military's overall climate as below average." Hall pointed out that in 1995, then Secretary of Defense William J. Perry revived the position of deputy assistant secretary for affirmative action, which had been eliminated in 1986 (Hall, 1999).

President Clinton in 1997 established the Advisory Board to the President on Race. Also in 1997, Patterson praised the military for its progress in equal opportunity, calling the Army "a

virtual model of successful race relations for the civilian community" (Patterson, 1997). In an article about the 50 years since Truman's integration of the Services, McMichael wrote: Despite the vastly improved race relations that have marked the five decades since President Harry S. Truman banned discrimination in the military, today's troops say they see an unavoidable truth: The Armed Forces will always have racists (McMichael, 1998). Many service members are optimistic about a good racial climate, he wrote, while "others are less optimistic, and they say the military, especially given racist behavior outside the gates, must redouble its efforts to promote good race relations through a combination of education, accountability and, especially, strong leadership."

The AFEOS stated that "the military's success in providing attractive opportunities for racial and ethnic minorities is reflected in the change in the demographics over the last two decades." The report indicated that Black representation in the military Services had risen to 20 percent in 1997. In September 1999, race/ethnicity percentages of active duty forces were: Whites, 66.2; Blacks, 19.8; Hispanics, 7.7; Native Americans, 0.9; Asian Americans, 3.5; and Others, 1.8 (DEOMI, 1999).

### **Career Progression Report**

*Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers*, also referred to as the pipeline report, was released the same day as the AFEOS. The study, which examined data collected through 1997, reviewed key stages of active duty officer career progression: recruiting, commissioning, training, assignments, evaluation, promotion, and retention. Findings of the report show that minority representation among officers rose from 7.0 percent to 15.3 percent from 1977 to 1997. The percentage of female officers increased from 5.9 to 14.1 during the same period.

"There are no DoD-wide goals for commissioning minorities and women as officers, but the Services see the need for a diverse force and have separate accession objectives concomitant with their specific requirements, and this approach has proved successful," (iii) stated the executive summary. According to the summary, the American military is widely viewed as a pioneer in providing equal opportunity for its uniformed members. From the 1948 Executive Order, signed by Truman that formally began the long process of integration to more recent admission of women into most military occupational specialties, the military Services have compiled a record of providing equal opportunity that often exceeds the progress of civilian society, the summary stated.

Some perceptions of equal opportunity expressed in the report were:

- Some minority and female members believe they are held to a higher standard than majority race colleagues, and, especially women, believe that they must pass "tests" to demonstrate their worth.
- Officers who felt they had been discriminated against generally believed that the discrimination act was committed by an individual rather than by the institution.

- Many women and minority officers felt that, overall, they had been treated fairly and that the equal opportunity climate was not better, and probably was worse, in the private sector.

In an article, "Why Black Officers Fail," Butler (1999) discussed reasons why Black officers are falling behind White counterparts in promotions at and above the rank of lieutenant colonel and suggested ways to overcome the problem. The cause may not be overt racism, but rather a debilitating inertia in the way young Black officers are mentored and a lack of common cultural understanding among both Black and White officers, he wrote. Butler showed that "up to the rank of major, Black officers constitute about 12 percent of the officer corps, but in the higher ranks the percentage decreases by nearly half. Conversely, as rank increases, the percentage of White officers increases by about 10 percent. The most difficult hurdle for Black officers actually seems to be from captain to major."

Butler suggested that, we can start educating our officers and senior leaders in cultural awareness . . . actually making an effort to understand why Blacks and Whites react differently in military and social settings would be of great value in helping us to work together and understand each other. As professional soldiers we need to learn to communicate across cultural lines, not unlike the cross-cultural communication in which the US Army Special Forces excels in external scenarios." He wrote that military officers need to be taught to, "overcome some of our cultural biases, or at least make us aware that we all have some. Once we acknowledge that we have these biases, then we can start to work through them. The socialization process of understanding and overcoming our cultural differences will require time, patience, and energy at all levels." He also encouraged mentoring. "Today's military must achieve a delicate balance: educating its young, evaluating its old, promoting its top achievers, constantly checking its promotion process -- and stressing the sort of fairness that will prevent latent prejudice from taking hold," wrote McMichael (1998).

In an article entitled, "Much progress, much yet to do," Andrea Stone of *USA Today* noted, "As the Armed Services commemorate the anniversary Sunday (July 23, 1998), the U.S. military is considered a model of racial integration, not just for Blacks but also for Hispanics and other minorities. But it also reflects a society still struggling with bias." The article pointed out how Black officers lag behind Whites in promotions. In the Army's colonel selection board cited in the story, 19 percent of Blacks were chosen, compared to 39 percent of eligible Whites. Fifty years after the military eliminated racial barriers, some service members say a subtle form of discrimination still persists. The article quoted NAACP President Kweisi Mfume: "The glass is both half-empty and half-full. There has been major progress. But, Blacks still find themselves the victims of discrimination, institutional, or individual."

### **Press Briefing Announced**

A brief press advisory announced that there would be an on-the-record press briefing at noon on November 23, 1999, in the DoD Briefing Room of the Pentagon to present results of the two studies. Participants were to include Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and

Readiness Rudy de Leon, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Equal Opportunity William E. Leftwich III, and Anita Lancaster, Assistant Director for Program Management, Defense Manpower Data Center. Lancaster is listed as a co-author of the AFEOS.

In addition to participating in the briefing, members of the press could receive a DoD news release, copies of the executive summaries of the reports, and copies of the AFEOS.

### **Role of the Press**

News media representatives report on events such as the DoD briefing on a regular basis, and some reporters cover the Pentagon as their routine assigned beat. Reporters are the first link in a chain of "gatekeepers" who sort facts and stories, allowing certain details through the gates for publication or broadcast (White, 1950). "Gatekeeping" is an important concept in communication theory and research as well as in the practice of journalism. Psychologist Kurt Lewin coined the term in 1947 to describe the process of family members at the dinner table. The term "gatekeeper" was borrowed by David Manning White in a 1950 study of one editor's news choices. What reaches news consumers in any given locale is but a grain in the sand of world events. The gatekeeping approach to news assumes that actors along the news-flow chain (information officers, reporters, wire editors, copy editors) use certain criteria to select from myriad events what will be passed on to the next link in the chain (Pasadeos, et. al., 1998). However, gatekeepers sometimes fail to deliver accurate information and educate their audiences (Kim, 1998). This researcher has found that sometimes the media actually use small percentages of the available news.

Mass media report, reflect, and influence public opinion. It has been assumed that communication through the mass media is a fundamental component of recognition of many social problems (Arkin, 1998). Arkin wrote that mass media objectives are: to entertain or inform, cover short-term events, deliver salient pieces of information, reflect society, address personal concerns, and make a profit. Wilson and Gutierrez (1995) wrote that the five central functions of the mass media are: surveillance, the sentinel or lookout role; correlation, the interpretation and linking function which helps audiences understand what is happening; transmission, the socialization function which defines the society's norms and values; entertainment, the function for enjoyment and diversion; and economic service, the function which deals primarily with delivering an audience for advertising messages.

In the United States, most reputable news media advocate the social responsibility theory of the press in which media seek to uphold their obligation to inform and educate the public -- the audience members. Media serve a "watchdog" function to inform the public of wrongdoings in government agencies, such as the military Services. Most journalists intend to be fair and accurate, but sometimes they let the drive to meet deadlines or to top the competition take control. Walter Lippmann wrote, "The press is like the beam of a searchlight that moves restless about, bringing one episode and then another out of darkness into vision. Men cannot do the work of the world by this light alone" (1961).

Domke argues that important insight into the continuing "huge racial chasm" between Whites and African Americans may be gained through systematic study of the press (1997). More than 200 years after the founding of the United States, and nearly 150 years since the abolition of slavery, Domke states, many scholars argue that the "scar of race" continues to divide Americans, particularly Whites and African Americans.

Some readers and viewers might perceive news reports as negative because they point out flaws in a system. However, it may be a matter of perspective. Journalists consider news values when gathering information and reporting stories. These factors include audience appeal, affect and effect, timeliness, proximity, conflict, curiosity, celebrities, and public people. The American Society of Newspaper Editors stated that credibility is based on, "enduring journalistic values -- balance, fairness and wholeness; accuracy/authenticity; accessibility; leadership -- and behavioral factors such as business practices and journalists' attitudes and behaviors" (Christopher, 1999).

Most journalists try to follow the principle of objectivity. Shoemaker and Reese (1996) pointed out that one function of objectivity is to protect a reporter, editor or publisher from criticism. In effect, objectivity mitigates gatekeeping bias (Stone, et. al., 1999). "Whatever else can be said about objectivity, it has become ingrained in the language and culture of American journalism." Objectivity still forms the basis for the most common model of news reporting and writing that prevails in newspapers (Beasley & Mirando, 1998). Since most Americans have either served in the military or know someone who has served, and the military is responsible for national defense, many news judgment factors apply to news reports about the DoD studies. Newspaper readers pay attention to such articles. News media influence and reflect public opinion, including that of members of the Armed Services, their friends and families, and the American public.

Studies show that the media's coverage and portrayal of minorities have an effect on members of both minority and majority groups. However, it is a complex effect, one mediated by each person's psychological makeup, social status, age, and how the individual uses the media (Wilson & Gutierrez, 1995). "Race and class are constant forces in society," said Caesar Andrews, an African American who is editor of Gannett News Service. "They do not deserve heavy-handed attention in every story, but even when they are not at center stage, they often lurk in the wings. Either way, the same standards apply: Check the facts. Insist on fair newsgathering. Think through why there's a need to publish. Then print only what you can explain and defend as news" (Media Leaders Forum, 1999).

### **Purpose of This Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the contents of the reports, DoD news releases and briefing, and press coverage of the *Armed Forces Equal Opportunity Survey* and *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers*. Comparisons were made between the contents of the reports and what was reported in the news media. Items were divided into the categories of news stories and commentaries. Editorials and opinion columns fell into the commentary

category. This examination includes coverage of the second report released the same day, *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers*. Since it was released at the same time as the AFEOS, the pipeline report might have been overlooked somewhat by the press or mistaken as part of the AFEOS.

This paper presents an examination of how the news media reported available information and of what commentaries were generated by the DoD studies.

### **Methodology**

The methodology used in this study is content analysis. Expected results were that the journalists would emphasize some points of the survey while neglecting others. Reporting in most cases would be rather superficial, compared to the amount of information supplied to reporters. Various newspaper stories and commentaries are quoted as examples. Portions of the report that could have been emphasized but were not are pointed out in the discussion.

One of the most important distinguishing characteristics of communication research is its focus on human symbolic exchanges; that is on messages, both verbal and nonverbal. Content analysis is a research method or measurement technique that involves a systematic study of the content of communication messages. Berelson defined content analysis as, "a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (1952). Content analysis can be used in research seeking to explain or describe communication. Its advantages lie in its ability to describe the messages under study, to make inferences about the creator of the message, and in providing a heuristic function to research (Stacks & Hocking, 1992). Content analyses appear frequently in journalism and mass communication journals. In fact, 40 percent of the articles appearing in *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* in the 1990s were content analyses (Stone, et. al., 1999).

Messages selected for the analysis include the AFEOS, copies of executive summaries of both reports, a transcript of the news briefing, DoD news releases, news reports of the studies, and commentaries about the survey results. Copies of the news briefing, news releases and executive summaries were obtained from the DefenseLINK on the Internet. Copies of news reports and commentaries were obtained by searching on the Internet from November 15, 1999, to December 15, 1999. Additional copies of press clippings were obtained from the DoD public affairs office and from the vertical files of the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute.

In this case, the universe of information was examined, as opposed to a representative sample. The unit of analysis was the news item. Each item was categorized as news or commentary, and stories were analyzed as containing information emphasized in the executive summaries, DoD news releases, or briefing. Another judgment call was whether the story's emphasis was positive or negative for the military. Results were then tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted. Guidelines for content analysis stress that categories should reflect the purpose of the research, be exhaustive, be mutually exclusive, and allow for independence. Also, all categories within the system should reflect one single classification principle. Holsti's reliability

formula was applied to ascertain inter-coder reliability (Stacks & Hocking, 1992). A standardized coding form was created, and a copy of the coding form is provided in Appendix A.

Research questions posed were:

- R1: To what extent does the news media emphasize the information from the news release, press briefing, or the reports?
- R2: Do the news reports appear to be accurate?
- R3: What is the content of news media commentary about the reports?
- R4: Did press coverage and commentaries appear to be positive or negative?

### **Findings**

This section of the paper presents findings regarding the press advisory and news release, the press briefing, and press coverage of the announcement of the results of the two DoD studies.

#### Press Advisory and News Releases

The press advisory, dated November 23, 1999, gave basic information the press needed in order to cover the noon briefing. A point of contact was listed. News Release No. 544-99 was titled in all capital letters: "DEFENSE DEPARTMENT EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND STUDY OF CAREER PROGRESSION OF MINORITY AND WOMEN OFFICERS." The release was typed single-spaced with double spaces between unindented paragraphs. It was marked for "IMMEDIATE RELEASE," and it was clearly identified that it came from the Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs). Telephone numbers were listed for the media and public/industry.

The first paragraph of the release began: "The Department of Defense made available today two studies concerning equal opportunity in America's active duty military." The rest of the paragraph identified the two studies.

In the second paragraph, Secretary of Defense Cohen is quoted:

"The military Services are second to no other institution in providing equal opportunity for all members. We take great pride in the high standards that we have set. But we must also be vigilant and remain responsive if we hope to sustain and improve the environment in which our military members live and work. The bottom line is that every individual who joins America's military must have full confidence that he or she will be allowed to excel to the full extent of his or her abilities."

Other paragraphs state that the survey was initiated by then-Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Edwin Dorn with the direction of Congress. According to the news release, the "lessons learned will allow more rapid analysis in the future."

About one-third down the second page, some responses are summarized. Two examples are: Large majorities of Service members in all groups believe that racial/ethnic relations today

are as good or better than they were five years ago; only small percentages of Service members said "not at all" when asked if racial/ethnic relations were good at their installation or aboard ship.

"There are differences in the way service members of different races and ethnic groups perceived the state of equal opportunity. African-American service members were more pessimistic about the degree of progress in equal opportunity in the nation than were members of other race or ethnic groups," stated a paragraph on page 2. This sentence appeared on page three: Minority service members were more likely than Whites to report being unfairly punished. Some 9 percent of Blacks, 6 percent of Hispanics, 5 percent of American Indian/Alaska natives, and 4 percent of Asian/ Pacific Islanders reported being unfairly punished in comparison to only 2 percent of Whites. (Capitalization is as it appeared in the news release.)

After stating on page three that the complete 296-page report, including an executive summary of the survey results, is available on the Internet, the news release switched to the career progression report. The news release stated that the report "affirms successes while pointing to areas that require continuing attention and effort." The main thrust of the report, according to the news release, was to examine performance in providing equal opportunity in the military Services. Nine paragraphs about the report followed, concluding with the Internet address of the complete 109-page report.

The concluding paragraph stated that the studies "demonstrate that the Department of Defense and the Armed Forces are clearly dedicated to providing equal opportunity to all uniformed members." The release also stated that the Deputy Secretary of Defense would host a meeting of the Defense Equal Opportunity Council in the near future to review the survey results with the Department's senior leadership.

"White service members have a more positive perception of race relations in the military than minority Service members" was the lead paragraph in a news release titled "Survey Examines Race Relations in the Military," by Jim Garamone of the American Forces Press Service. Garamone's release was mostly upbeat as it played up such points as 90 percent of Whites being positive about the state of race relations and, "Service members across the spectrum said race relations in the military today are better than in the nation." He wrote that DoD will use the survey as a baseline and that the manpower center will send another race relations survey in fiscal 2001.

#### Comments About the News Releases

The writers of News Release No. 544-99 followed some guidelines for an effective release. Namely, it has a heading with a point of contact and telephone numbers (however, with no person named), and it is marked for immediate release.

However, the four-page news release is typed in single space, which means it would be eight pages if double-spaced. The release contains too much information as it lists nine or 10

points for each of the studies. Most public affairs guidance on news releases suggests keeping releases short and simple. One suggestion would have been to release the reports on different days in order to obtain more overall coverage and for each report to receive more attention and press coverage on its own.

Officials who released the report might have selected another date to announce the results other than the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. A different release date might have attracted more media attention and more readers/viewers. Garamone's release was more succinct and focused, but it dealt with only the equal opportunity survey.

### DoD News Briefing

The DoD news briefing about the two studies was conducted on November 23, 1999. DoD participants included de Leon, Leftwich, Lancaster, Jacquelyn Scarville, Curtis Gilroy and Kenneth H. Bacon. deLeon, Leftwich, and Lancaster are identified earlier in this paper. Gilroy is the Director of Special Projects and Research for the Under Secretary of Defense, and Bacon is the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs. Gilroy is listed as study director for the pipeline report.

Lancaster summarized the purpose and scope of the study, emphasizing that no similar survey "to our knowledge, in the United States or anywhere else" had ever been done. In reviewing results, she said, "We learned that 62 percent of Whites, compared to 69 to 78 percent of the other racial/ethnics, said they had at least one offensive encounter with another DoD person during the previous year."

Concerning extremism and hate groups, Lancaster stated that, "99 percent said they had not been asked to join (or) participate in extremist activities, and 95 percent of our members did not know someone who belonged to an extremist organization." She pointed out that, "over 90 percent of our people knew to some extent how to report, but only 14 percent, we learned, had actually reported something that occurred to them in the year --, again, the year prior to filling out the survey."

"When you look at even the military personnel lifecycle, and people being treated unfairly in their environments or at work, the June 1997 Gallup poll said that 30 percent of Blacks reported being treated unfairly while shopping in stores in the last 30 days. This is not asking what happened over the last 12 months (as the DoD survey did)," said Lancaster. "Twenty-one percent of Blacks report being treated unfairly at work."

Lancaster pointed out a disparity in the perception across race/ethnic groups concerning this survey item: Is the military paying the right amount of attention to racial/ethnic harassment and discrimination? Stating that too little attention was being paid were 62 percent of Blacks, 38 percent of Hispanics, 28 percent of Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 17 percent of Whites.

Leftwich stated that from 1977 to 1997, "we virtually more than doubled the number of minority and women who are in the officer ranks; for minorities, which were at 7 percent, have gone up to 15.3 percent; for women, who were at 5.9 percent, are up to 14.1 percent. Our people in the military, they not only work with, but they socialize to a great extent with people who don't look like themselves." He called the survey, "a tool for us to gauge ourselves by, it's a tool for us to open our eyes. It's also really a window, because when we did this survey, we're looking at 1.4 million individuals from our active military Service."

Scarville noted that racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to experience certain kinds of incidents than are Whites. "So Services that have a higher representation of racial/ethnic minorities will be more likely to have higher rates," she said. She added that the more senior your pay grade, the less likely you are to have incidents. However, Blacks of all ranks were equally likely to have an incident of racial and ethnic insensitivity, harassment, or discrimination.

Women make up 19 percent of new officer accessions, Gilroy said. He said if promotion rates of White men were used as a benchmark, White women generally do as well as White men beyond the rank of O-4. He said Black men do not do as well as White men, and Black women do a bit worse than Black men. Black women, he said, "suffer the double jeopardy," not only of being a woman but being Black.

"The challenge for us tomorrow is what we end up doing with the report today," said Leftwich.

"Maybe, I think, the most important thing that comes out of this report and this process is the fact that if we want to be better as a military organization," said de Leon. "This is something we have to constantly talk to each other about."

#### Comments About the News Briefing

DoD officials and experts who dealt with the studies were available to present information, answer reporters' questions, and comment on issues. By reading the reports of the studies and the transcript of the briefing, one can gather that the participants adequately and openly addressed the material. One exception could be the reluctance of de Leon to place a grade on the job that DoD is doing in the EO area. Perhaps he was wise in doing so, choosing to follow his comment with optimistic statements.

### **News Reports**

#### National Public Radio

One radio news broadcast transcript was available: "All Things Considered" aired on National Public Radio (NPR). In the introduction to the report, the host stated that, "in that survey, thousands of men and women report that fellow soldiers insult, threaten and even attack

them because of their race. Reporter Steve Inskeep referred to the study's finding as visible racism. He used sound bites from Lancaster and Leftwich to illustrate points.

Inskeep blended the career progression study into the report, although not specifically referring to it by name and stating that "Black women face the most challenges of all." He said, "Pentagon officials say while the survey brings them some bad news, they still think they're doing better than much of the country. The U.S. military has portrayed itself as a leader in race relations since President Harry S. Truman ordered the Armed Forces to integrate in 1948."

The NPR report ended with a reference to an unidentified African-American officer who said the key for him is to ignore irritations and learn skills to move ahead. NPR's report is balanced, providing some positive information as well as some negative information before ending with a local tie-in.

#### "News Hour with Jim Lehrer"

Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) featured a roundtable discussion of, "race relations in the U.S. military," during its telecast of Monday, November 29, 1999. After playing sound bites from Lancaster and Secretary Cohen, Ray Suarez discussed the reports with a retired Army colonel, an Army Reserve lieutenant colonel and John Butler, co-author of *All We Can Be: Black Leadership and Racial Integration the Army Way*.

Butler said that the results are not surprising. "We've always known that Blacks and Whites would not see race relations in the military the same way," he said. Butler emphasized the importance of behavior and structure -- "the opportunity structure for Black Americans in any organization is much more important than White racist attitudes."

Retired Colonel David Hunt said he found it "unsettling" that 79-82 percent of Service personnel said that they did not bring these types of issues to the chain of command.

"Let's keep in mind that the purpose of the military is to first of all defend the country, and that race relations is simply a by-product of that defense of the country," Butler said.

"It's very, very important that we have respect for the individual and respect one another," said Herman Bulls, an Army Reserve lieutenant colonel. "And it's up to our leaders to enforce this in the sense of sensitivity training that may be required, in the sense of training particularly at the senior -- at the enlisted soldier level."

Hunt said, "It's not just race. If they don't trust the chain of command to talk about something like this, what else don't they trust the chain of command to talk about?"

Various opinions were expressed during this program. The reporter's questions were not so leading that they slanted the opinions expressed. Overall, the report is balanced with both

positive and negative remarks. The program contained information about both studies but did not specifically refer to the officer progression report by name.

### Jet Magazine

In its December 13, 1999, issue, *Jet* ran two stories about the AFEOS report. One emphasized Defense Secretary Cohen's call for a military-wide review of conduct after a Pentagon study found that up to 75 percent of Black military personnel and members of other ethnic groups reported experiencing racially offensive behavior.

The other story opened with an example of a staff sergeant's remembering being called the "N word" in basic training and saying, "I considered it part of the training and that's how I got through it." After mentioning statistics about experiencing offensive behavior, the story included a paragraph about minorities of all racial groups indicated they had close personal friendships (84 percent) or socialized (83 percent) with people of other races. The account quoted Margaret Simms, Research Director of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, "a think tank specializing in racial issues," as saying, "the survey undermines the notion of racial harmony that the military attempts to project." However, the story ended on an optimistic quote by Simms that the military has a, "chance to take steps that might make them better."

### Reflections (DEOMI Publication)

*Reflections*, a publication of DEOMI, published a news page of excerpts of remarks by Leftwich from the press briefing. "Our people not only work with, but they socialize to a great extent with people who don't look like themselves. They have social relationships, not just professional," he told a reporter. He called those types of relationships "positive" and said bonds of trust are very important when it comes to our military effectiveness and unit cohesion. "Equal opportunity in all instances does equate to readiness," he said. "The work that we do with equal opportunity and how we evolve relations in our military and in our nation is in our best interest. We will do better as a military and as a nation as we continue to get better at working these issues."

On the next page of *Reflections* was Jim Garamone's American Forces Press Service news release which begins: "White service members have a more positive perception of race relations than minority service members." A paragraph near the end of the story stated that DoD leaders are concerned about equal opportunity training and reporting procedures. "Almost 90 percent of Service members indicated they had received training and knew the reporting procedures. Most also said they would not report a 'bothersome' situation because they felt the situation was not important enough or nothing would be done about it" (Garamone, 1999) A picture of combat soldiers accompanied the story. Its caption read: "Service members of different race and gender must be able to trust each other to work well together."

## Newspaper Coverage

A news story titled, "Pentagon to Release Close-Hold Race Relations Report," appeared November 19, 1999, in the *Newport News Daily Press*. It stated that the Department of Defense was preparing to release a comprehensive, controversial report on race and ethnic relations in the military that attempts to measure real and perceived discrimination in the ranks, including the level of member participation in hate groups (Philpott). The story mentioned how Congress ordered the report and how one Congressman had been pressuring DoD to release the study results. DoD officials assured the Congressman the study would be released by Thanksgiving, the story said.

When the reports were released on November 23, two days before Thanksgiving, several news media covered the event. The Associated Press (AP), which provides news services to 1,700 newspapers and 5,000 broadcast outlets in the United States and 8,500 media subscribers in 112 countries (Associated Press, 1999), filed a news story that day. Newspapers' use of the story written by Tom Raum ranged from 438 to 965 words. A sampling of the headlines includes: Chattanooga (Tenn.) *Times and Free Press*: "Cohen says no place for racism in military"; *San Diego Union-Tribune*: "Cohen calls for review after a survey of race shows deep divisions"; (Norfolk) *Virginian-Pilot*: "Cohen: says Service has no room for racism"; *Dubuque* (Iowa) *Telegraph-Herald*: "Cohen says military must do more to end racism"; and *San Juan* (P.R.) *Star*: "Cohen says military branches must do more to end racism."

AP's lead paragraph, which ran unchanged in the newspapers sampled, stated: WASHINGTON -- Defense Secretary William Cohen called yesterday for a military-wide review of conduct after a Pentagon study said up to 75 percent of Blacks and other ethnic minorities reported experiencing racially offensive behavior. The second paragraph mentioned the "companion" pipeline study indicating the percentage of minority and women officers had doubled in 20 years.

Raum had written an AP story on Monday, November 22, 1999, stating that the most extensive survey of military racial attitudes ever taken would be released on Tuesday. Minorities serving in the military are generally more pessimistic about their chances of advancement than Whites, he wrote. Raum's story was based on an interview with Pentagon spokesman Bacon.

Three newspapers -- the *New York Times*, *USA Today* and *Washington Post* -- gave similar coverage to the reports. *The Times* front-page story was headlined, "Race gap seen in the military, despite gains." *The Post* ran a front-page under the headline, "75 percent of military's minorities see racism" with a subhead, "In survey, Whites offer drastically different view." *USA Today* ran its story on page 15 headlined, "Poll: Most minority troops encounter racism in military."

*The Times* quoted Dorn, who commissioned the survey: "The results of this survey are not nearly as wonderful as we might have liked. It gives a good sense of the kinds of things that need to be worked on." Leftwich said the report gave initial answers but initial answers are not

enough. Leftwich also was quoted in the *Post* as saying, "There are positive things going on in the U.S. military, which is not to say that we do not have problems. Our insistence on self-examination will bring about the institutional health we need."

*The Post* quoted Wade Henderson, Executive Director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, who said the study, "reflects the subtle and deeper problems of race found in American life." Simms of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies agreed that the findings of the survey reflected the racial/ethnic problems of society as a whole.

*USA Today* mingled some optimism among the survey results. The story quoted Cohen, who pledged a review; NAACP President Kweisi Mfume, who assailed the report because of its omission of any recommendations for change; and President Clinton, who told U.S. peacekeepers that their diversity is a potent symbol to warring Albanians and Serbs. *USA Today* gave the final paragraph to the pipeline report, while the *Times* ran four paragraphs about the officer progression study, calling the Pentagon's record, "mixed."

"Bragg racial climate called good" was the headline in Fayetteville, N.C., home of the 18<sup>th</sup> Airborne Corps. The story in *Fayetteville Online* interspersed facts from the survey with local information, showing formal equal opportunity complaints have dropped considerably since 1993. Fort Bragg officials were willing to talk about race relations, but they would not allow reporters to informally survey soldiers on post about their attitudes, the story stated. Two enlisted men, who agreed to interviews off post, said they did not see any race problems in their unit, but one Asian American said he encountered some racism at a local mall.

A *New York Times* story dated November 28, 1999, discussed the findings, plus included quotes from Charles Moskos, who said: "Lesson number one is that Blacks will always see race relations in a more pessimistic way than Whites. This cuts across gender and rank and is not likely to change in the foreseeable future." The story stated that many respondents did not officially report a bothersome racial incident because they didn't think anything would be done. *The Times* story closed with a quote by retired General Colin L. Powell: "The day soldiers stop bringing you their problems is the day you have stopped leading them. They have either lost confidence that you can help them or concluded you do not care. Either case is a failure of leadership."

Both studies were covered by *The (Army, Air Force, and Navy) Times*, unofficial weekly publications covering the military Services. "The racism factor, bias still thrives in military, survey shows" headlined a story that began like this: "The racist jokes haven't disappeared. Nor have hostile stares, offensive remarks and condescending comments." The separate pipeline story had this headline: "Minorities, women left behind in officer promotions." Its lead paragraph stated: "Despite decades of trying to increase opportunities for women and minorities, the military officer corps remains largely the province of White men."

On November 25, 1999, the *Dayton Daily News* was among newspapers that ran an Associated Press follow-up story on the EO survey. Its headline was: "Survey results no

surprise, officers say." The subhead stated: "Military color blind, but not perfect." Dr. Brenda L. Moore, an associate professor of sociology at the State University of New York at Buffalo, was quoted: "I think the idea that the military does a better job at race relations than the civilian society is a comment on just how poor relations are in society."

The news stories presented information provided from the DoD news release, briefing or executive summaries from the reports, and some media localized their stories. Reporters played up the largest statistics, which were about the number of non-Whites who had experienced racism within the past 12 months. In most cases, the pipeline study results received very little space. One exception was the story in the *Army/Air Force/ Navy Times*, which was rather comprehensive.

### Newspaper Commentaries

At least 11 newspaper editorials and six editorial commentary columns were found and examined.

"Black and White and olive drab," was the title of an editorial in the *Sunday Star-News* of Wilmington, N.C., dated November 28, 1999. "The military has long prided itself on race relations, which appear to be better than those in American society in general," stated the first paragraph. After discussing the AFEOS, the piece concluded: "But the successes they have achieved so far offer grounds for cautious optimism that things can get better yet. Clearly, they need to."

The same day the *Orlando Sentinel* published an editorial on "Racism in Uniform." Its subhead was: "Society benefits from greater racial tolerance and sensitivity, and what better place to nurture these traits than in the military?" After referring to the AFEOS, the editorial stated: "Ideally, Mr. Cohen's conduct review will result in a strategy to bring about more awareness and encourage further progress. The military must strive to eliminate racism just as should the rest of American society. But the military must make a stronger effort to show troops that racism weakens the ranks and undermines the national interest."

"At a minimum, this much can be said about the results of the U.S. military's survey on racism: "Our armed forces still have a problem," began an editorial on, "Racism in the Military" in the November 29, 1999, *Buffalo News*. The editorial closed: "Whether racism in the armed forces is a fact or a misperception -- almost certainly, there are elements of each -- it hurts the military's ability to do its job, both to wage war and to attract new recruits. Military leaders should use this survey as a starting place, a tool to help uncover the facts and the fictions of racism in the military. And once that is done, they need to treat both as the cancers they are."

An editorial in the *Chicago Daily Herald* on November 29, 1999, began: "The United States military deserves to be commended for confronting its potential racism after a Pentagon study found that up to 75 percent of Blacks and other ethnic minorities reported experiencing racially offensive behavior." After discussing the survey, the editorial stated: "An atmosphere

of threat is at work in the military, and the only way to cure it is to embark on a battle against the ignorance causing blanket racism."

The *Portland (Maine) Press Herald* editorialized that military leaders, "have to be diligent about educating their troops that no person is inferior to any other." It concluded: "Even though things can and should be better, by keeping standards high and working with people of all races to help reach them, the Services have created a culture of achievement that is open to all."

"Military bias poll calls for attention," was the headline of an editorial in the *Tacoma News Tribune*. The newspaper's stand was that, "prompt and aggressive leadership on this issue could help close the divide in an essential institution where cohesion isn't a luxury but an absolute necessity."

A *San Antonio Express-News* editorial was headlined, "Opportunities mix with racism in military." "Even though the military may be ahead of other institutions in fostering diversity and understanding, that does not mean it has become a color-blind society," stated the editorial. "The survey's greatest value is to gauge what still needs to be done to improve race relations. Like the society it mirrors, the military is a work in progress," it concluded.

*The Columbian* of Vancouver, Wash., expressed the view that the military leads the way, but persistent racism is "inimical to mission." The newspaper concluded: "Where the military has led, the rest of us have tended to follow."

"A recent survey that revealed persistent racial divisions in the military says as much about society at large as about America's armed forces," read the opening paragraph of a *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot* opinion piece. The editorial's conclusion was: "And if the military, which is ahead of society on race relations, has its work cut out for it, the task surely is even greater and more pressing for a divided nation."

Under the heading, "Old Enemy Returns," a *Philadelphia Inquirer* editorial asserted that the military deserves credit for undertaking the comprehensive survey, but it must do more. This editorial is the only one among those examined that mentioned the pipeline study, calling it "good news."

The Ohio State University *Lantern* called the military's review hypocritical. The concluding paragraph stated: "How can the U.S. military claim to care about civil rights if it so blatantly ignores the rights of homosexuals? Racism and homophobia are two parts of a terrible whole: prejudice. You cannot support one and oppose the other. That would make you a hypocrite."

Three columns commenting on the surveys were written by nationally syndicated African - American columnists, Debra Mathis, William Raspberry and Carl Rowan. Two other columns were written by local writers in Philadelphia and Ottawa, and one was written by a former member of the U.S. Congress.

Raspberry's column appeared first, on November 26, 1999. He referred to the book by Butler and Moskos and quoted Butler and Dorn. "If people in an institution that has moved so far in equal opportunity continue to report these unpleasant experiences, think what must be happening in the average factory," Dorn said. Raspberry concluded that the military could have something to say to the rest of us after all.

Referring to the military as an extension of a larger American society, Rowan wrote that, "racism permeates everything and is probably practiced more openly today than 30 years ago." He wrote that he feared, "some problems are endemic, flowing out of the fact that the people who volunteer most to do the dirty, dangerous part of defending this country are the minorities who are most scorned and cheated, and the fact that so many of our military people retain the mind-sets of civilians in uniform."

Mathis stated her surprise at the survey results because, "what they found does not shine upon the military experience, but rather sullies its famous reputation for equal opportunity and integration." She wrote that the good news is that Defense Secretary Cohen ordered the military to "repair the breach." Mathis pointed out that since Cohen is married to a Black woman he might be attuned to the non-White experience. He appears to be sincere and was above board enough to release the report, she stated. Her conclusion was: "Let America be all that it should be."

Stating that, "racial concord in the ranks might be a myth," R. Cort Kirkwood's commentary was headlined, "Throwing a Grenade into the Barracks." He wrote that the, "miracle of the U.S. military is that it works so well despite these many different people." He continued that "publishing this piece of humbug sociology is rather akin to tossing a grenade into the barracks. It causes confusion and injury. Everyone will be sniffing for the faintest whiff of 'racism.' No one needs a survey to know that in a group of millions, some folks aren't going to like each other. So what?"

"Survey on Race Is Leaving a Dent in Military's Armor," was the headline on a *Philadelphia Inquirer* column by Claude Lewis. His column began: "For years, the U.S. military has been regarded as the best proof that integration in America can work." The columnist pointed out the success of "sand-colored soldier" Colin Powell before stating, "we are now being forced to acknowledge that even in our rule-heavy armed forces, inequality continues to separate one American from another." He called the situation disheartening and potentially destructive.

"In Civil Rights, the Military Still Leads the Way" in the *San Diego Union-Tribune* was written by former Congressman Lionel Van Deerlin. He commented on President Truman's decision to issue Executive Order 9981 abolishing racial segregation in the Armed Forces and Coast Guard. Van Deerlin wrote: "And today, more than any place else, the military is where African Americans, Hispanic Americans and Asian Americans regularly give orders, instead of just taking them."

## Discussion of Commentaries

The majority of the editorials referred to the military Services as if they are leaders in the equal opportunity area, especially in race relations. The editorials indicate that they expect the military to continue to set the pace for the rest of society, but to realize that national security depends on cohesion. Most of the editorials stress the importance of strong, prompt leadership in solving the issue. One newspaper grouped racism and homophobia, calling the military "hypocritical." Only one of the 11 editorials mentioned the pipeline study, referring to it as "good news."

Columns from three nationally syndicated writers, two local columnists and one former Congressman were examined. The syndicated columnists appear to have been disappointed in the results of the survey but hopeful that the military can continue lead in the equal opportunity arena. Concluding that the military could have something to say to the rest of us after all, Raspberry seemed somewhat disappointed after being encouraged by the book by Moskos and Butler three years earlier. He sees the military as a leader in equal opportunity and wonders about the state of EO in society. Rowan shares Raspberry's view somewhat but is not so optimistic stating that, "racism permeates everything. It is probably practiced more openly today than 30 years ago." Mathis, the only woman columnist in the group, also seemed disappointed by the survey results but was hopeful about the "good news" that Cohen had ordered the military to "repair the breach." Mathis is the only columnist who wrote that Cohen is married to a Black woman. She also wrote the most positive conclusion: "Let America be all that it should be."

Lewis' editorial was much like those by the three syndicated columnists, pointing to how the military has been an example of how integration can work. However, he called the situation disheartening and potentially destructive. Kirkwood seems to believe publishing the results is harmful, "like tossing a grenade into the barracks. It causes confusion and injury." He wrote: "No one needs a survey to know that in a group of millions, some folks aren't going to like each other." Perhaps the most positive commentary was that by former Congressman Van Deerlin, who traced integration of the Armed Forces from Truman's Executive Order 9981. His column leaves the impression that the military still offers more opportunities to persons of all races than anywhere else in society.

## **Summary and Conclusions**

During this content analysis, the following items were examined: 16 newspaper stories, 11 editorials, six columns, two weekly magazine items, two stories in a military publication, one national radio story, and one television newscast. Twenty-two of the items were mostly news and 17 were commentaries. Most items contained much of the information provided by the news release, briefing, and reports. In most cases, the information about minorities experiencing racially offensive behavior led off the story. Often the stories included the finding about White members being more positive than minority members about racial/ethnic issues in the military. Overall, considering the findings of the survey, the coverage was rather balanced. DoD officials

might have preferred emphasizing some other findings, but the entire AFEOC was available to the press. Columnists appeared somewhat disappointed about the survey results but optimistic that the military can fix its perceived problems. Coverage of the two DoD studies either combined them as two parts of the same story or played up the AFEOC and barely mentioned the pipeline study. Most of the stories, including the thorough story in *Reflections*, omitted the officer progression study.

Here are responses to the four research questions of this study:

**R1: To what extent would the news media emphasize the information from the news release, press briefing or the reports?**

The media tended to emphasize the information about minorities experiencing offensive encounters within the past 12 months. Some of the stories included information about positive personal relationships with members of other races, but that information was seldom featured. Commentaries dealt mostly with the AFOES, emphasizing the minority perceptions and expressing disappointment that the military, a leader in equal opportunity, is not doing better.

**R2: Do the news reports appear to be accurate?**

The reports seem to be accurate, although most are incomplete. Various reporter - selected items to feature, and the information about offensive encounters appeared to be the one reporters believed would attract the most attention from the audience.

**R3: What is the content of news media commentary about the reports?**

Generally, columnists and editorial writers appeared to be surprised that the military, a leader in integration and race relations, would have so many perceived problems. Some columnists stated that increased leadership emphasis on equal opportunity issues is essential for national security. Some writers praised Secretary Cohen for his pledge to right the situation.

**R4: Did press coverage and commentaries appear to be positive or negative?**

DoD officials might not like the reports, and the glaring statistics about perceptions of offensive encounters cause the report to reflect somewhat negatively on the EO status. From that angle, the coverage could be called negative. However, most of the press coverage also mentioned some of the positive aspects, such as different races socializing and most service members saying race relations were good on their installations or ships. Most stories included the finding that most military personnel perceive race relations in the military are better than in the nation. Overall, the coverage was somewhat balanced, except the emphasis could have been changed in most cases.

"Maximum disclosure with minimum delay," is a principle taught to military public affairs officers. In the case of the DoD studies, officials seem to have met the maximum disclosure standard as they presented a large volume of information, including the almost 300-page report. However, the delay could be debatable. Inquiring reporters (and Congress members) might ask why the data was collected in 1996-97, the AFEOC is dated August 1999, and the results were not released until November 1999. Briefers at the press conference said one reason for the delay was so that Dorn could have a chance to read the report before its release. Another reason was that the researchers were preparing a, "more substantive executive summary," said Lancaster. Both the AFEOC and the pipeline study were dated August 1999.

Reporters seemed to go for the big numbers provided by the DoD officials and put them in their lead paragraphs. Many good points from the survey could have been emphasized and possibly printed. Some examples are:

- All minority groups indicate a higher probability of getting fair performance evaluations in the military.
- A very small percentage (6 percent) of any minority group indicated racial/ethnic conditions were "not at all good" at their installation or ship.
- Large majorities indicated they were comfortable with members of other racial/ethnic groups.
- Only 2 percent stated that they tried to avoid an assignment due to expected racial/ethnic harassment or discrimination.
- Many members viewed their association with their Service positively.

In summary, the EO race/ethnic survey received mixed coverage from the mass media, while the pipeline study generally was combined with the other or ignored. Members of the press who covered or commented on the results of the surveys are aware that the military Services are striving for a better situation in race relations. Members of the general public could get the impression that the military is a caring, people-oriented organization dealing with its real or perceived problems, instead of ignoring them. Although the AFEOS might have been released later than expected, it appears to be comprehensive and objective. Secretary Cohen's approach of promising immediate action to rectify the situation was appreciated. However, the commentators will have more to criticize if improvements are not made. The AFEOS will serve as a benchmark for another survey scheduled for 2001. Results of the next survey will probably be released more quickly, possibly to avoid criticism. The officer progression report could have been released on another date so that the media could have given it more attention as a stand-alone report. Both reports are full of valuable information which researchers could examine to explore trends and issues, seeking ways to improve the equal opportunity climate.

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**Appendix A**

**Coding Form**

**Publication** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Covers**      **AFEOC** \_\_\_\_\_      **Pipeline** \_\_\_\_\_

**News** \_\_\_\_\_      **Commentary** \_\_\_\_\_

**Does the item emphasize information from news release/briefing/report? (circle)**

**All**      **Very much**      **Somewhat**      **Very little**      **None**

**The item's coverage is (circle)**

**Very positive**      **Mostly positive**      **Neutral**      **Some negative**      **Very negative**

**Subject of commentary:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other:** \_\_\_\_\_