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**WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON**

June 17, 1943.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Subject: Reduction in Army strength in 1943.

In the light of the strategical situation, the apparent strength of the Russian Army, and the quality of the French divisions in North Africa, it has been thought permissible to delay the organization of 12 Armored or Infantry Divisions scheduled for the latter part of 1943. The primary purpose of passing these divisions into the 1944 program is to relieve the existing divisions of the necessity of furnishing further cadres and therefore to permit a more intensive effort to improve their quality.

Since last fall we have had an exhaustive examination made throughout the country to see what economies could be developed in the employment of soldiers engaged in the Supply services, the maintenance personnel of posts, headquarters staffs, etc. A "yardstick" has been developed which is susceptible of rather accurate application to any garrison, which should result in considerable economies. Already we have determined on a reduction of approximately 125,000 men, civilians and soldiers, in the Army Service Forces.

As the Army program approaches completion we are finding it possible to cut down on training establishments, and in due time can eliminate completely a number of these set-ups. At the present moment formal decision has been taken which reduces the training schools for specialists (such as mechanics, drivers, gunners, communications men, etc., etc.) by 50% in the Air Forces, 25% in the Ground Forces, and 33% in the Army Service Forces. The exact numbers involved I have not available at this moment.

A cut has been determined upon of approximately 100,000 men heretofore scheduled in the program for combat troop units other than divisional, such as Antiaircraft, Field Artillery, Tank Destroyer units, etc.

The Air Forces are now studying the possibility of delaying somewhat in the activation of squadrons in the latter part of 1943, carrying these units over into the 1944 program. Whether or not this will prove advisable cannot be stated at this time. The point is, we are considering two factors, the more rapid development of highly trained surplus combat crews and at the same time the better training of the new units created.

It appears at this time that the minimum reduction in Army strength in the 1943 program will be between 500,000 and 600,000 and there is a possibility that a maximum of 750,000 will be reached.

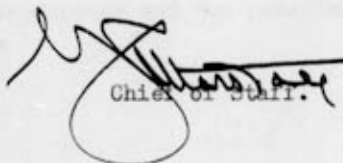


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The Selective Service has been notified of the reduction requirements for August, from 215,000 to 175,000. Notification will probably be given the Selective Service in about two weeks of the reduction in the September Army quota from 215,000 probably to 130,000. It is our intention not to take final decision as to the elimination from the 1943 program of the October to December divisions until the situation of the Russian Army can be estimated in the latter part of August. Incidentally, this reduction in divisions makes it conveniently practicable to provide the agreed upon equipment for the French divisions without embarrassment to our own units.

It is my opinion that no publicity whatever should be given to these reductions, that as a matter of fact the matter should be treated with great secrecy. Any announcement could be seized upon by the Axis propaganda agencies as an indication of our failure to make good on our program. Furthermore, it would probably give rise to a wave of unfortunate optimism in this country which would result in a relaxation of effort particularly in the production field. Probably the most important factor which permits us to make the reductions in combat strength is the status of the Russian Army and it would seem highly inadvisable to discuss the possibility of its destruction or defeat which would have a very definite bearing on our decision in August as to further increments in the 1943 program. Mr. McNutt and Mr. Donald Nelson have been informally advised of these prospective reductions and of the secrecy believed necessary in the matter.


Chief of Staff.

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