

## **FINAL RECOMMENDATION, EVACUATION OF JAPANESE AND OTHER SUBVERSIVE PERSONS FROM THE PACIFIC COAST**

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Government Document

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Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt (1880-1962) was commander of the U.S. Fourth Army at the time of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in December 1941. DeWitt had authority over the West Coast of the United States, and soon after the attack he began advocating the evacuation of Japanese from the area. Citing national security, DeWitt at first recommended only that Japanese nationals be removed. Before long, however—and at least partly under pressure from politicians, the War Department, and the press—DeWitt became one of the strongest advocates of internment for Japanese Americans.

On February 13, 1942, DeWitt recommended to President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882-1945) that all persons of Japanese ancestry be removed from the West Coast. He based his recommendation in equal measure on "military necessity" and racial grounds. "In the war in which we are now engaged," he wrote, "racial affinities are not severed by migration. The Japanese race is an enemy race and while many second and third generation Japanese born on United States soil, possessed of United States citizenship, have become 'Americanized,' the racial strains are undiluted."

DeWitt's recommendation formed the basis of Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066, which gave the War Department the right to remove Japanese aliens and Japanese Americans from designated military areas to internment camps.

### **PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENT**

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Evacuation of Japanese and other Subversive Persons from the Pacific Coast

*SECRET*

HEADQUARTERS WESTERN DEFENSE COMMAND AND FOURTH ARMY  
Presidio of San Francisco, California  
Office of the Commanding General.

February 13, 1942

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Secretary of War

(Thru: The Commanding General,  
Field Forces, Washington, D. C.)

SUBJECT: Evacuation of Japanese and other Subversive Persons from the Pacific Coast.

1. In presenting a recommendation for the evacuation of Japanese and other subversive persons from the Pacific Coast, the following facts have been considered:

*a. Mission of the Western Defense Command and Fourth Army.*

- (1) Defense of the Pacific Coastal Frontier of the Western Defense Command, as extended, against attacks by sea, land or air;
- (2) Local protection of establishments and communications vital to the National Defense for which adequate defense cannot be provided by local civilian authorities.

*b. Brief Estimate of the Situation.*

- (1) Any estimate of the situation indicates that the following are possible and probable enemy activities:
  - (a) Naval attack on shipping in coastal waters;
  - (b) Naval attack on coastal cities and vital installations;
  - (c) Air raids on vital installations, particularly within two hundred miles of the coast;
  - (d) Sabotage of vital installations throughout the Western Defense Command.

Hostile Naval and air raids will be assisted by enemy agents signaling from the coastline and the vicinity thereof; and by supplying and otherwise assisting enemy vessels and by sabotage.

Sabotage, (for example, of airplane factories), may be affected not only by destruction within plants and establishments, but by destroying power, light, water, sewer and other [text illegible] facilities in the immediate vicinity thereof or at [text illegible] serious damage or destruction in congested areas may readily be caused by incendiarism.

- (2) The area lying to the west of the Cascade and Sierra Nevada Mountains in Washington, Oregon and California, is highly critical not only because the lines of communication and supply to the Pacific theater pass through it, but also because of the vital industrial production therein, particularly aircraft. In the war in which we are now engaged racial affinities are not severed by migration. The Japanese race is an enemy race and while many second and third generation Japanese born on United States soil, possessed of United States citizenship, have become "Americanised", the racial strains are undiluted. To conclude otherwise is to expect that children born of white parents on Japanese soil sever all racial affinity and become loyal Japanese subjects, ready to fight and, if necessary, to die for Japan in a war

against the nation of their parents. That Japan is allied with Germany and Italy in this struggle is no ground for assuming that any Japanese, barred from assimilation by convention as he is, though born and raised in the United States, will not turn against this nation when the final test of loyalty comes. It, therefore, follows that along the vital Pacific Coastal Frontier over 112,000 potential enemies, of Japanese extraction, are at large today. There are indications that these are organized and ready for concerted action at a favorable opportunity. The very fact that no sabotage has taken place to date is a disturbing and confirming indication that such action will be taken.

*c. Disposition of the Japanese.*

(1) *Washington.* As the term is used herein, the word "Japanese" includes alien Japanese and American citizens of Japanese ancestry. In the State of Washington the Japanese population, aggregating over 14,500, is disposed largely in the area lying west of the Cascade Mountains and south of an east-west line passing through Bellingham, Washington, about 70 miles north of Seattle and some 15 miles south of the Canadian border. The largest concentration of Japanese is in the area, the axis of which is along the line Seattle, Tacoma, Olympia, Willapa Bay and the mouth of the Columbia River, with the heaviest concentration in the agricultural valleys between Seattle and Tacoma, vis., the Green River and the Puyallup valleys. The Boeing Aircraft factory is in the Green River valley. The lines of communication and supply, including power and water which feed this vital industrial installation, radiate from this plant for many miles through areas heavily populated by Japanese. Large numbers of Japanese also operate vegetable markets along the Seattle and Tacoma water fronts, in Bremerton, near the Bremerton Navy Yard and inhabit islands in Puget Sound opposite vital naval ship building installations. Still others are engaged in fishing along the southwest Washington Pacific Coast and along the Columbia River. Many of those Japanese are within easy reach of the forests of Washington State, the stock piles of seasoning lumber and many sawmills of southwest Washington. During the dry season these forests, mills and stock piles are easily fired. (See inclosed map.)

(2) *Oregon.* There are approximately 4,000 Japanese in the State of Oregon, of which the substantial majority reside in the area in the vicinity of Portland along the south bank of the Columbia River, following the general line Bonneville, Oregon City, Astoria, Tillamook. Many of these are in the northern reaches of the Willamette Valley and are engaged in agricultural and fishing pursuits. Others operate vegetable markets in the Portland metropolitan area and still others reside along the northern Oregon sea coast. Their disposition is in intimate relationship with the northwest Oregon sawmills and lumber industry, near and around the vital electric power development at Bonneville and the pulp and paper installations at Camas (on the Washington State side of the Columbia River) and Oregon City (directly south of Portland). (See inclosed map.)

(3) *California.* The Japanese population in California aggregates approximately 93,500 people. Its disposition is so widespread and so well known that little would be gained by setting it forth in detail here. They live in great numbers along the coastal strip, in and around San Francisco and the Bay Area, the Salinas Valley, Los Angeles and San Diego. Their truck farms are contiguous to the vital aircraft industry concentration in and around Los Angeles. They live in large numbers in and about San Francisco, now a vast staging area for the war in the Pacific, a point at which the nation's lines of communication and supply converge. Inland they are disposed in the Sacramento, San Joaquin and Imperial valleys. They are engaged in the production of approximately 38 percent of the vegetable produce of California. Many of them are engaged in the distribution of such produce in and along the water fronts at San Francisco and Los Angeles. Of the 93,500, in California, about 25,000 reside inland in the mentioned valleys where they are largely engaged in vegetable production cited above, and 54,600 reside along the coastal strip, that is to say, a strip of coast line varying from eight miles in the north to twenty miles in width in and around the San Francisco bay area, including San Francisco, in Los Angeles and its environs, and in San Diego. Approximately 13,900 are dispersed throughout the remaining portion of the state. In Los Angeles City the disposition of vital aircraft industrial plants covers the entire city. Large numbers of Japanese live and operate markets and truck farms adjacent to or near these installations. (See inclosed map.)

*d. Disposition of other subversive persons.*

Disposed within the visual coastal strip already mentioned are large numbers of Italians and Germans, foreign and native born, among whom are many individuals who constitute an actual or potential menace to the safety of the nation.

**2. ACTION RECOMMENDED.**

*a.* Recommendation for the designation of prohibited areas, described as "Category A" areas in California, Oregon and Washington, from which are to be excluded by order of the Attorney General all alien enemies, have gone forward from this headquarters to the Attorney General through the Provost Marshal General and the Secretary of War. These recommendations were made in order to all the Attorney General in the implementation of the Presidential Proclamations of December 7 and 8, 1941, imposing responsibility on him for the control of alien enemies as such. These recommendations were for the exclusion of all alien enemies from Category "A". The Attorney General has adopted these recommendations in part, and has the balance under consideration. Similarly, recommendations were made by this headquarters, and adopted by the Attorney General, for the designation of certain areas as "Category B" areas, within which alien enemies may be permitted on pass or permit.

*b.* I now recommend the following:

(1) That the Secretary of War procure from the President direction and authority to designate military areas in the combat zone of the Western Theater of Operations, (if necessary to include the entire combat zone), from which, in his discretion, he may exclude all Japanese, all alien enemies, and all other persons suspected for any reason by the administering military authorities of being actual or potential saboteurs, espionage agents, or fifth columnists. Such executive order should empower the Secretary of War to requisition the services of any and all other agencies of the Federal Government, with express direction to such agencies to respond to such requisition, and further empowering the Secretary of War to use any and all federal facilities and equipment, including CCC Camps, and to accept the use of State facilities for the purpose of providing shelter and equipment for evacuees. Such executive order to provide further for the administration of military areas for the purposes of this plan by appropriate military authorities acting with the requisitioned assistance of the other federal agencies and the cooperation of State and local agencies. The executive order should further provide that by reason of military necessity the right of all persons, whether citizens or aliens, to reside, enter, cross or be within any military areas shall be subject to revocation and shall exist on a pass and permit basis at the discretion of the Secretary of War and implementation by the necessary legislation imposing penalties for violation.

(2) That, pursuant to such executive order, there be designated as military areas all areas in Washington, Oregon and California, recommended by me to date for designation by the Attorney General as Category "A" areas and such additional areas as it may be found necessary to designate hereafter.

(3) That the Secretary of War provide for the exclusion from such military areas, in his discretion, of the following classes of persons, vis.:

- (a) Japanese aliens.
- (b) Japanese American citizens.
- (c) Alien enemies other than Japanese aliens.
- (d) Any and all other persons who are suspected for any reason by the administering military authorities to be actual or potential saboteurs, espionage agents, fifth columnists, or subversive persons.

(4) That the evacuation of classes (a), (b), and (c) from such military areas be initiated on a designated evacuation day and carried to completion as rapidly as practicable.

That prior to evacuation day all plans be complete for the establishment of initial concentration points, reception centers, registration, rationing, guarding, transportation to internment points, and the selection and establishment of internment facilities in the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Corps Areas.

That persons in class (a) and (c) above be evacuated and interned at such selected places of internment, under guard.

That persons in class (b) above, at the time of evacuation, be offered an opportunity to accept voluntary internment, under guard, at the places of internment above mentioned.

That those persons in class (b) who decline to accept voluntary internment, be excluded from all military areas, and left to their own resources, or, in the alternative, be encouraged to accept resettlement outside of such military areas with such assistance as the State governments concerned or the Federal Security Agency may be by that time prepared to offer.

That the evacuation of persons in Class (d) be progressive and continuing, and that upon their evacuation persons in class (d) be excluded from all military areas and left to their own resources outside of such military areas, or, in the alternative, be offered voluntary internment or encouraged to accept voluntary resettlement as above outlined, unless the facts in a particular case shall warrant other action.

(5) The Commanding General, Western Defense Command and Fourth Army, to be responsible for the evacuation, administration, supply and guard, to the place of internment; the Commanding Generals of the Corps Areas concerned to be responsible for guard, supply and administration at the places of internment.

(6) That direct communication between the Commanding General, Western Defense Command and Fourth Army and the Corps Area Commanders concerned for the purpose of making necessary arrangements be authorized.

(7) That the Provost Marshal General coordinate all phases of the plan between the Commanding General, Western Defense Command and Fourth Army, on the one hand, and the Corps Area Commanders on the other hand.

(8) That all arrangements be accomplished with the utmost secrecy.

(9) That adult males (above the age of 14 years) be interned separately from all women and children until the establishment of family units can be accomplished.

(10) No change is contemplated in Category "B" areas.

3. Although so far as the Army is concerned, such action is not an essential feature of the plan, but merely incidental thereto, I, nevertheless, recommend that mass internment be considered as largely a temporary expedient pending selective resettlement, to be accomplished by the various Security Agencies of the Federal and State Governments.

4. The number of persons involved in the recommended evacuation will be approximately 133,000. (This total represents all enemy aliens and Japanese-American citizens in Category "A" areas recommended to date.)

5. If these recommendations are a proved detailed plane will be made by this headquarters for the proposed evacuation. The number evacuated to be

apportioned by the Provost Marshal General among the Corps Area Commanders concerned as the basis for formulating their respective plans. It is possible that the State of California, and perhaps the State of Washington, will be able to offer resettlement facilities for a given number of evacuees who may be willing to accept resettlement.

6. Pending further and detailed study of the problem, it is further recommended: (1) That the Commanding General, Western Defense Command and Fourth Army, coordinate with the local and State authorities, in order to facilitate the temporary physical protection by them of the property of evacuees not taken with them; (2) That the Commanding General, Western Defense Command and Fourth Army, determine the quantity and character of property which the adult males, referred to in paragraph 2*b*(9), may be permitted to take with them; and (3) That the Treasury Department or other proper Federal agency be responsible for the conservation, liquidation, and proper disposition of the property of evacuees if it cannot be cared for through the usual and normal channels.

J. L. DeWITT  
Lieutenant General, U. S. Army,  
Commanding.