

2-1-42

2-142  
Gene al DeWitt, General  
Gullion and Major Bondetson.

General, Bondetson is here, I want to talk to you first.  
He is listening to me. Are you recording that thing?  
Are you able to record this General?

Yes, it is being recorded.

General Gullion: I have just returned from a conference in the Attorney General's Office. There were present Mr. Edgar Hoover, Mr. Rowe, Mr. McCloy, our Assistant Secretary of War, Mr. Ennis, the council for the Immigration Department of the Department of Justice—he is also Chief of the Enemy aliens Control Division, Major Bondetson and I; and Mr. Biddle was there.

They handed us a press release which they wanted the War Department to sponsor with The Department of Justice. I am going to read it to you, and we did not agree to it; we wanted to refer it to you and find out what you felt about it, and we also thought you might want to wait until after your conference at 11 at Sacramento tomorrow with the Governor and Mr. Clark before you let us know about it.

Mr. Clark has been furnished a copy of this press release. Shall I read it to you.

General DeWitt: Yes please.

General Gullion: Proposed joint release to the Secretary of War and the Attorney General:

"The Secretary of War and the Attorney General today made a joint statement to the Press with respect to the control of alien enemies on the West Coast.

Lt. General DeWitt in command of the Western Defense Command, which includes the three western coast states and five additional states, has made a detailed survey of the entire territory to determine what steps should be taken for its protection against any possible activities by enemy aliens. As a result of the survey, The Secretary of War and General DeWitt recommended to the Attorney General, who, under the President's War Proclamations, has control of enemy aliens, that the following steps be taken to insure such complete protection.

The Army has surveyed and recommended 38 prohibited areas in California. Further areas have been studied by the Army and are being recommended in California, Washington, Oregon and the other West Coast states. The Attorney General designated these areas immediately upon the designation recommendation of the War Department to be evacuated of all alien enemies, Japanese, German and Italians. Announcement of the areas to be made as soon as they are designated by the Attorney General.

The areas include regions bordering on military installations, plants engaged in war production, public works, such as aqueducts, bridges, pipelines and wharfs, and coastal points of strategic importance.

The Secretary of War and General DeWitt have, in addition, recommended to the Attorney General that 12 larger areas along the West Coast be restricted so that, in order to remain within the areas, all alien enemies must obtain permits which will be issued to them under regulations of the Department of Justice, expressly limiting their persons and conduct therein. All alien enemies in the Western Defense Command will be registered between Feb. 2nd and February 7th. They will be identified, photographed, fingerprinted and their residence and employment recorded. These steps will insure compliance with control over alien enemies exercised in the restricted areas.

Immediately after declaration of war alien enemies considered potentially dangerous were apprehended by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and placed in detention under the custody of the Immigration Service of the Department of Justice. More are being arrested from time to time. Those who are to be interned for the duration of the war will be turned over to the Army.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has charge of the investigation of the subversive activities. To date there has been no substantial evidence of planned sabotage by any alien. The FBI and the other agencies of the Federal Government are, however, very much alive to the possibility of sabotage, particularly in case of a possible attack on our shores by the enemy.

After the apprehension of these aliens, their firearms, cameras, short-wave radio sets, radio transmitters and similar property were confiscated. After the alien enemies have been registered and identified, a check will be made to enforce the regulations against possession of the forbidden property, and any aliens found with such property in their possession will be subject to apprehension.

The government is fully aware of the problem presented by dual nationalities, particularly among the Japanese. Appropriate governmental agencies are now dealing with the problem. (Now watch this sentence—that is interjected by me). The Department of War and the Department of Justice are in agreement that the present military situation does not at this time require the removal of American citizens of the Japanese race.

General DeWitt: I wouldn't agree to that.

General Cullion: I know that - final paragraph.

General Gullion: The Secretary of War, General DeWitt, The Attorney General, and the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation believe that appropriate steps have been and are being taken." (That is the end of the release).

Gullion:

General DeWitt:

I questioned that paragraph at once, and there may be some question about the sentence on the preceding page "To date there has been no substantial evidence of planned sabotage by any aliens."

Now that paragraph that the Department of War and the Department of Justice are in agreement -- that doesn't require the removal of American citizens of the Japanese race, was the one we questioned and we refused to agree to the press release and it was determined by the conference that I should read this to you, and that they wanted a definite recommendation from you and with reasons, if you could give them, for instance Mr. Rose said that when he was out there that you were very much opposed to any mass evacuation and he wondered why you had changed your mind, and several suggestions were made as to whether the Roberts report and Justice Robert's conversation with you; and I suggested that General DeWitt has told me that he has travelled up and down the West Coast, he has visited all these sectors, he has talked to all the Governors and other local civil authorities and he has come to this conclusion, it is my understanding that General DeWitt does favor mass evacuation but it was decided to read this to you and ask you to let us know tomorrow after your conference just exactly in a definite recommendation what you wanted.

General DeWitt:

Yes, what I'll do after I get hold of the record, I'll read it over carefully and analyze from my viewpoint and then give you my comment. Now, I can say this right now as a result of the development of this situation out here as affected by the publication of these restricted areas out here; that is a means of control of the possible sabotage of enemy aliens, but it is not a positive

It only can be made positive by removing those people who are aliens and who are Japs of American citizenship, away from the area. Until they are moved, we have no positive assurance irrespective of the that sabotage will not occur because they are still present to accomplish it.

General Gullion:

Now I might suggest General, Mr. McCloy was in the conference and he will probably be in any subsequent conference until we decide about this press release, and he has not had all the benefit of conversations we have had with you -- if you could give us something, not only in conversation, ~~but also in writing~~ but a written thing that we could record, as stating your position, your

recommendation and the reasons for your recommendation, that is, they want to know and McCloy also; we weren't able to tell the conference on what you based your recommendations, other than the reasons I suggested, that you had been on the job going up and down and that is what you had concluded.

General DeWitt:

General ~~DeWitt~~:

Yes, I will be glad to do that.

Now Bandetson is here Sir. He may have some other points.

Major Bandetson:

Yes Sir, General DeWitt. I have nothing further to add in a general way. There are a few things that arose that it might be well to have recorded for your consideration in addition. As far as any action is concerned looking toward evacuation of persons involving citizens of the United States of Japanese extraction, they will have nothing apparently whatever to do with it. They say that if that comes to pass, if we recommend and it is determined that there should be a movement or evacuation of citizens, they say hands off, that it is the Army's job; that is point one that come up. Point two, they agree with us that it is possible from their standpoint, from a legal standpoint they say "yes" we can designate certain areas which are absolutely prohibited to all except those whom we permit to come in; in other words, the licensing theory that because of military necessity we say this is a prohibited area to all persons, irrespective of nationality and citizenship, and only those whom we license can come in or remain in. They agree with us that this could be done as the legal basis for exclusion, however, we insist that we could also say that while all whites could remain, Japs can't, if we think there is military necessity for that. They apparently want us to join with them so that if anything happens they would be able to say "this was the military recommendati

General DeWitt:

What they are trying to do, it looks to me just off the bat, without thinking it over, they are trying to cover themselves and lull the populace in to a false sense of security.

Major Bandetson:

Well, of course, the immediate occasion for the release is, that they know here that there is a very heavy sentiment on the West Coast for a Japanese evacuation but that is the immediate occasion for it. Biddle wants to as you say, have the people mollified on it, by being able to put forth the statement that in view of the military situation that there is no occasion for it. Well that of course is to protect themselves.

General DeWitt:

Well I will read that thing over very carefully, I won't be able to get any answer to it until sometime Tuesday.

Major Bandetson:

Well, of course I —

General DeWitt: It will take some little time to record it and I have to leave at 9 o'clock to go to Sacramento, and I won't get back much before half past four in the afternoon, and then sometime Tuesday I will dig into it and analyze it and be prepared to read my comments back over to you on the phone and you can record it.

Major Bendetson: All right Sir. Sometime Tuesday morning. (Howe also wanted to know just what the details would be if the Army were to undertake a mass evacuation.)

General DeWitt: I tell you Bendetson, I haven't gone into the details of it, but Hell, it would be no job as far as the evacuation was concerned to move 100,000 people.

Major Bendetson: Put them on trains and move them to specified points.

General DeWitt: We could do it in job lots you see. We could take 4000 or 5000 a day, or something like that.

Major Bendetson: We would have to put them in shelter that we could find inland - 3 & camps inland, or National Guard areas under tentage inland, etc.

General DeWitt: With the men first.

Major Bendetson: We are now making a survey here of all available shelter facilities to find out what there is that is not required for troops and we have asked the Corps Area Commanders to tell us about Fair Grounds and agricultural farms owned by the States, etc. I think we can find places for them.

General DeWitt: Yes, you see we would move the men first, then move the women and children after.

Major Bendetson: Of course, there is a large administrative problem involved in keeping the records straight so that we would not have another Evangeline situation.

General DeWitt: Oh yes, we could work this up but I mean to say that it is an impossible task, or an extremely difficult task, I don't think so.

Major Bendetson: No Sir, I agree. All right sir, we expect to have your comments sometime Tuesday morning after you have had the conference with Mr. Clark.

General DeWitt: You see I can't give the whole day to it, we are busy, but I will get after it Tuesday morning and hope to be able to telephone it to you sometime Tuesday afternoon but it may not be until Wednesday.

Major Bendetson: All right Sir, we will keep you advised. Goodbye.  
(Transcribed by Helen Noble - Feb. 1, 1942.)

CC: Col. Carrington.

4318