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December 30, 1942

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McCLOY:

Subject: Evacuation of Hawaiian Japanese

1. General Kimmens has stated that he wishes to evacuate from Hawaii to the Mainland approximately 8000 persons of Japanese ancestry. But he does not want them to be repatriated after arrival or to come in contact with persons who will be repatriated, in order to protect the secrecy of the locations of vital war installations constructed since Pearl Harbor.

2. The State Department has at all times taken the position that since the present understanding between the United States and Japan contemplates the exchange of all nationals, an attempt by this country to bar Japanese aliens resident in Hawaii from exchange might well jeopardize the whole arrangement. The State Department points out, however, that at the present time repatriation is at a standstill principally because this country has been unwilling to consent to the repatriation of some 3000 individuals requested by the Japanese where repatriation has been objected to by our intelligence agencies on individual grounds. Some of these 3000 are resident in Hawaii, but the greater portion come from the Mainland. Unless and until this question is settled, refusal to permit repatriation of Hawaiian Japanese is only of minor significance. The State Department has informally recognized that the relative military importance of preserving the military security of Hawaii and of obtaining the return of our nationals is a question for determination by the military. Consequently, if the military determines that considering the probable consequences it is more desirable to bar the repatriation of Hawaiian Japanese, the State Department will govern itself accordingly.

3. At the request of the Navy Department, concurred in by the War Department, the State Department has agreed that in any event four months will be permitted to elapse before the repatriation of any Japanese from Hawaii. Furthermore, under date of December 17, 1942, the Secretary of War wrote the Secretary of State requesting that no Japanese from Hawaii be repatriated or brought to the Mainland for repatriation without a prior determination by the War Department that the person involved was not in a position to transmit information of military importance to the enemy.

ASV 014.311 HAWAII
CLASSIF. NO. ASV 014.331 Repatriation of Japs - Hawaii

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4. If the importance of maintaining the secrecy of Hawaiian defenses is such as to render repatriation undesirable, similar precaution should be taken to see that no information of this nature is transmitted to any person who may possibly be repatriated in the future. This means that if General Ammons evacuates some Japanese to the Mainland, they must be kept out of contact not only with all possible repatriates but also with those who might carry information to possible repatriates. The only completely satisfactory answer to this is strict confinement in a concentration camp, with censorship of mail and no visitors.

5. If a decision is reached to evacuate certain Japanese from Hawaii and place them in confinement as outlined in the preceding paragraph, several problems immediately arise:

a. A suitable camp must be allocated for that purpose from existing facilities, or a new one constructed.

b. Personnel must be made available to run the camp.

c. Some existing or new agency must be designated to administer the camp. In this connection it should be noted that War Relocation Authority's present policies revolve entirely around resettlement, as contrasted with confinement.

d. A legal means of effecting confinement must be worked out, if possible. In this connection, if the evacuees were all enemy aliens, internment would be a possibility; but if the evacuees were not interned in Hawaii, admittedly a critical theatre, it would be difficult to justify their internment here. Similarly, if some of the evacuees were American citizens, they might be subjected to restrictions issued pursuant to Executive Order 9066, but it would again appear incongruous to confine persons when in the United States who were permitted their liberty in a strategic area. It would be stretching things to the limit to place United States citizens in concentration camps merely because through no fault of their own, they had acquired knowledge which would be of value to the enemy, especially in cases where no disposition to transmit such knowledge can be shown.

6. I recommend that General Ammons be advised (as per Tab A) that the same reasons which appear to make it advisable to bar repatriation of Hawaiian evacuees seem to require their isolated confinement in the United States, and that he be requested to furnish the following information:

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a. Whether he desires isolated confinement for evacuees from Hawaii;

b. Whether evacuees will include individuals claiming U.S. citizenship;

c. Whether failure to evacuate additional persons from Hawaii would adversely affect the military security of the Islands to an appreciable degree.

7. I further recommend that this memorandum be referred to G-2 for coordinated study with OPD and G-4, particularly as to the following points:

a. Considering the present impasse on repatriation, is it advisable at this time to employ additional facilities, critical materials and manpower to accomplish the isolated confinement of Hawaiian evacuees apart from American Japanese located in relocation centers?

b. Would it be substantially satisfactory from a security point of view if Hawaiian evacuees were permitted to live with American Japanese who have neither requested nor been requested for repatriation, in relocation centers administered by War Relocation Authority?

c. Balancing all factors, is evacuation to the Mainland desirable?

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Enc.

1. Tab A - Commanding General, Hawaiian Department, from ASW.

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