

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON

October 17, 1942

My dear Mr. President:

Recently you sent to the Navy Department, during my absence, copy of a letter to you from Elmer Davis dealing with the subject of Japanese who are American citizens, and who were evacuated from the Pacific Coast. On this letter you asked for our recommendations. I would regard it as unwise and unnecessary that you make any statement on the two bills presented in Congress dealing with the evacuated Japanese, one of which proposes to deprive citizenship and the other which proposes to intern them for the duration of the war.

I do not think either of these bills has any chance of passage and I do not regard either of them of sufficient importance to warrant a statement from you.

The feeling in the Navy Department with respect to the enlistment in the Navy of citizens of Japanese descent is adverse to such action. The maximum of use which we could make in the Navy of people of this character might be in a civilian capacity in the Intelligence service.

I do not regard this particular problem set forth in Mr. Davis's letter as anywhere near as important as the problem of dealing with the Japanese in the Hawaiian Islands and, concerning this latter problem, nothing, apparently, is being done despite the fact that there is a very large number of Japanese sympathizers, if not actual Japanese agents, still at large in the population of Oahu, who, in the event of an attack upon these islands, would unquestionably cooperate with our enemies. I still believe very earnestly that some steps should be taken to separate the loyal from the disloyal in that population. I think this is far more important than the other matter.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Frank Knox

The President

The White House

October 29, 1942

My dear Mr. President:

You have asked for my comments and recommendations on that portion of Secretary Knox's letter to you of October 17, 1942, here-with returned, which refers to the Japanese situation in Hawaii.

I think that I can safely say that all persons of Japanese ancestry resident in the Hawaiian Islands who are known to be hostile to the United States have been placed under restraint in internment camps either in the islands or on the mainland. In addition, many others suspected of subversive tendencies have been so interned.

As you are aware, the question of evacuating the Japanese from Hawaii has been considered carefully on several occasions. There is a wide divergence of views in both services on the subject, but after consultation with the naval authorities it has been determined to evacuate certain Japanese and Japanese Americans to the mainland. It is intended to move approximately five thousand during the next six months as shipping facilities become available. This, General Emmons believes, will greatly simplify his problem, and considering the labor needs in the islands, is about all that he has indicated any desire to move although he has been given authority to move up to fifteen thousand.

The evacuees from Hawaii will be received on the West Coast by the Army and then shunted through immediately to the Relocation Centers which are under the jurisdiction of War Relocation Authority. Facilities already exist for handling them.

I am writing you a separate letter on the question raised by Elmer Davis of permitting Japanese Americans to enter the Army.

Faithfully yours,

HENRY L. STIMSON

Secretary of War

The President
The White House

Encl.

ltr. 10/17/42 Secretary of the Navy to the President

Copies to Gen. Emmons, C&R, SW
OASW:JJ:cc:NZ

Copy sent to R. Director of W.

WAR DEPARTMENT
ADMINISTRATIVE
HEADQUARTERS
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

FEB 3:29
FILE NO. 3:29

November 2, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR

✓ THE SECRETARY OF WAR
THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMY

In the Secretary's letter of October twenty-eighth he mentions that General Emmons believes the Japanese situation in Hawaii is being taken care of but that General Emmons is also taking into consideration the labor needs in the Islands.

I think that General Emmons should be told that the only consideration is that of the safety of the Islands and that the labor situation is not only not a secondary matter but should not be given any consideration whatsoever.

The amount of sugar or pine-apples grown or harvested has such a small ratio of effect on our national economy that the United Nations can get along with a large reduction in the Hawaiian supply if necessary.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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General Emmons and Admiral Nimitz should be advised of this. Military and naval safety is absolutely paramount.

F. D. R.

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AUTH. C G. HAW. DEPT.

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2 NOV 1942

A.G.

HEADQUARTERS HAWAIIAN DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE DEPARTMENT COMMANDER
FORT SHAFTER, T. H.

In reply refer to:

014.30 (G-2)

2 November 1942

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WAK DEPARTMENT
SECRETARY'S OFFICE

My dear Mr. Secretary:

Your letter to the President on October 28, 1942, in connection with evacuation of persons of Japanese extraction from the Hawaiian Islands accurately portrays the situation. There is one point, however, that should be noted. The five thousand to be evacuated in the near future, when and if transportation becomes available, are not necessarily disloyal to the United States. This group will comprise those residents who might be potentially dangerous in the event of a crisis, yet they have committed no suspicious acts. It is impossible to determine whether or not they are loyal.

In general the evacuation will remove persons who are least desirable in the territory and who are contributing nothing to the war effort.

Very sincerely,

Delos C. Elkins
DELOS C. ELKINS

Lieutenant General, U. S. Army,
Commanding.

The Honorable Henry L. Stimson
Secretary of War
Washington, D. C.

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