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*W. Coast File*

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Security Officer [Signature]

MEMORANDUM to the Secretary

This is in response to your memorandum of April 20, requesting a summary of the highlights of the final report by General John L. DeWitt, covering the evacuation of persons of Japanese descent from the West Coast.

The report is published in book form, occupying more than 600 pages of text, photographic illustrations, maps, graphs, and charts. It covers in considerable detail virtually every step of the decisions leading to evacuation, organization for carrying out the evacuation program, and operation of the temporary assembly centers which housed the evacuated people until they could be established in relocation centers under jurisdiction of the War Relocation Authority.

Particularly pertinent to consideration of the memoranda from the Federal Communications Commission is the review of reasons for the evacuation. The report recounts the apprehension of some 2,000 enemy aliens within the Western Defense Command immediately after Pearl Harbor; later, the proclamations designating certain items in the hands of enemy aliens as contraband; and the establishment of prohibited zones around vital installations, from which enemy aliens were barred.

The report reviews discussions and exchanges of memoranda between the War Department and the Department of Justice relating to establishment of prohibited zones, right of search and seizure, and wholesale evacuation. In brief, the Department of Justice is said to have refused to raid without warrants property occupied by citizens, even if aliens also resided there; this was regarded by the Army as hampering the necessary security measures. On the matter of wholesale evacuation, which would include American citizens of Japanese ancestry as well as aliens, the Attorney General pointed out in a memorandum that "this would have to be done as a military necessity in these particular areas. Such action, therefore, should in my opinion be taken by the War Department and not by the Department of Justice."

The Commanding General of the Western Defense Command finally determined that mass evacuation of all persons of Japanese ancestry was necessary to the military security of the West Coast.

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"His conclusion was in part based upon the interception of unauthorized radio communications which had been identified as emanating from certain areas along the coast. Of further concern to him was the fact that for a period of several weeks following December 7th, substantially every ship leaving a West Coast port was attacked by an enemy submarine. This seemed conclusively to point to the existence of hostile shore-to-ship (submarine) communication." (Page 4.)

"The Pacific Coast had become exposed to attack by enemy successes in the Pacific. The situation in the Pacific theatre had gravely deteriorated. There were hundreds of reports nightly of signal lights visible from the coast, and of intercepts of unidentified radio transmissions. Signaling was often observed at premises which could not be entered without a warrant because of mixed occupancy. The problem required immediate solution. It called for the application of measures not then in being." (Page 5.)

(Footnote) "It is interesting to note that following the evacuation, interception of suspicious or unidentified radio signals and shore-to-ship signal lights were virtually eliminated and attacks on outbound shipping from west coast ports appreciably reduced." (End of footnote. Page 5.)

"Further the situation was fraught with danger to the Japanese population itself. The combination of spot raids revealing hidden caches of contraband, the attacks on coastwise shipping, the interception of illicit radio transmissions, the nightly observations of visual signal lamps from constantly changing locations and the success of the enemy offensive in the Pacific, had so aroused the public along the West Coast against the Japanese that it was ready to take matters into its own hands. Press and periodical reports of the public attitudes along the West Coast from December 7, 1941, to the initiation of controlled evacuation clearly reflected the intensity of feeling. Numerous incidents of violence involving Japanese and others occurred; many more were reported but were subsequently either unverified or were found to be cumulative." (Pages 6-9.)

"It had become essential to provide means which would remove the potential menace to which the presence of this group under all the circumstances subjected the West Coast. It is pertinent now to examine the situation with which the military authorities were then confronted." (Page 9.)

"Because of the ties of race, the intense feeling of filial piety and the strong bonds of common tradition, culture and custom, this population presented a tightly-knit racial group. It included in excess of 115,000 persons deployed along the Pacific Coast. Whether by design or accident, virtually always their communities were adjacent

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to very vital shore installations, war plants, etc. While it was believed that some were loyal, it was known that many were not. To complicate the situation no ready means existed for determining the loyal and the disloyal with any degree of safety. It was necessary to face the realities--a positive determination could not have been made.

"It could not be established, of course, that the location of thousands of Japanese adjacent to strategic points verified the existence of some vast conspiracy to which all of them were parties. Some of them doubtless resided there through mere coincidence. It seemed equally beyond doubt, however, that the presence of others was not mere coincidence. It was difficult to explain the situation in Santa Barbara County, for example, by coincidence alone.

"Throughout the Santa Maria Valley in that County, including the cities of Santa Maria and Guadalupe, every utility, air field, bridge, telephone and power line or other facility of importance was flanked by Japanese. They even surrounded the oil fields in this area. Only a few miles south, however, in the Santa Ynez Valley, lay an area equally as productive agriculturally as the Santa Maria Valley and with lands equally available for purchase and lease, but without any strategic installations whatever. There were no Japanese in the Santa Ynez Valley.

"Similarly, along the coastal plain of Santa Barbara County from Cavieta south, the entire plain, though narrow, had been subject to intensive cultivation. Yet, the only Japanese in this area were located immediately adjacent to such widely separated points as the El Capitan Oil Field, Elwood Oil Field, Summerland Oil Field, Santa Barbara airport and Santa Barbara lighthouse and harbor entrance. There were no Japanese on the equally attractive lands between these points. In the north end of the county is a stretch of open beach ideally suited for landing purposes, extending for 15 or 20 miles, on which almost the only inhabitants were Japanese.

"Such a distribution of the Japanese population appeared to manifest something more than coincidence. In any case, it was certainly evident that the Japanese population of the Pacific Coast was, as a whole, ideally situated with reference to points of strategic importance, to carry into execution a tremendous program of sabotage on a mass scale should any considerable number of them have been inclined to do so.

"There were other very disturbing indications that the Commanding General could not ignore. He was forced to consider the character of the Japanese colony along the coast. While this is neither the place

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nor the time to record in detail significant pro-Japanese activities in the United States, it is pertinent to note some of these in passing. Research has established that there were over 126 separate Japanese organizations along the Pacific Coast engaged, in varying degrees, in common pro-Japanese purposes. This number does not include local branches of parent organizations, of which there were more than 310.

"Research and co-ordination of information had made possible the identification of more than 100 parent fascistic or militaristic organizations in Japan which have had some relation, either direct or indirect, with Japanese organizations or individuals in the United States. Many of the former were parent organizations of subsidiary or branch organizations in the United States and in that capacity directed organizational and functional activities. There was definite information that the great majority of activities followed a line of control from the Japanese government, through key individuals and associations to the Japanese residents in the United States." (Pages 8-10.)

It is apparent from the memorandum from the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission that he is convinced that there was no illicit transmission of radio signals on the West Coast, and that the evidence concerning such radio signals, which contributed to the decision to evacuate, was spurious.

It is true that in numerous areas of southern California there were Japanese living near points vital to the American war effort. But with few exceptions the Japanese were settled there long before the installations were made which now are so vital. It is only natural that, once the decision to evacuate was made, all possible evidence would be mustered to justify the act. Coincidental situations are in some instances now being highlighted to strengthen such justification.

I should like to point out another element not touched upon in the report which may have contributed to the decision to evacuate all persons of Japanese descent. The Intelligence branch of the Western Defense Command had not been particularly active in conducting investigations of the activities of Japanese in the West Coast area. More information was available in the Office of Naval Intelligence and in the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Arrests of Japanese aliens immediately after Pearl Harbor were based largely on intelligence records of these two agencies, especially O.N.I. The Commanding General of the Western Defense Command had responsibility for defending the West Coast, but had not had direct supervision of intelligence work among West Coast Japanese. His confidence in the thoroughness of the clean-up operations immediately following the outbreak of war was something less than complete.