

This Is War! Stop Worrying About Hurting Jap Feelings

By HENRY McLEMORE

Seattle Times
January 30, 1942

LOS ANGELES, Friday, Jan. 30--Speaking strictly as an American, I think Americans are nuts. Twenty-four hours in Los Angeles have convinced me of this.

We are at war. California is our key state, not only because of its airplane industry, but because its shores offer the most logical invasion point.

So what does the government do about the tens of thousands of Japanese in California? Nothing.

The only Japanese apprehended have been the ones the F.B.I. actually had something on. The rest of them, so help me, are as free as birds.

There isn't an airport in California that isn't flanked by Japanese farms. There is hardly an air field where the same situation doesn't exist.

They run their stores. They clerk in stores. They clip lawns. They are here, there and everywhere.

You walk up and down the streets and you bump into Japanese in every block. They take the parking stations. They get ahead of you in the stamp line at the post office. They have their share of seats on the bus and street car lines.

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This doesn't make sense, for half a dozen reasons. How many American workers do you suppose are free to roam and ramble in Tokyo?

Didn't the Japanese threaten to shoot on sight any white person who ventured out-of-doors in Manila?

So, why are we so beautifully courteous?

I know this is the melting pot of the world and all men are created equal and there must be no such thing as race or creed hatred, but do those things go when a country is fighting for its life?

Not in my book. No country has ever won a war because of courtesy, and I trust and pray we won't be the first one to lose one because of the lovely, gracious spirit.

Everywhere that the Japanese have attacked to date, the Japanese population has risen to aid the attackers. Pearl Harbor, Manila.

What is there to make the government believe that the same wouldn't be true in California? Does it feel that the lovely California climate has changed them and that the thousands of Japanese who live in the boundaries of this state are all staunch and true Americans?

* * *

I am for immediate removal of every Japanese on the West Coast to a point deep in the interior. I don't mean a nice part of the interior, either. Herd 'em up, pack 'em off and give 'em the inside room in the badlands. Let 'em be pinched, hurt, hungry and dead up against it.

Sure, this would work an unjustified hardship on 80 per cent or 90 per cent of the California Japanese. But the remaining 10 or 20 per cent have it in their power to do damage--great damage--to the American people. They are a serious menace and you can't tell me that an individual's rights have any business being placed above a nation's safety.

If making one million innocent Japanese uncomfortable would prevent one scheming Japanese from costing the life of one American boy, then let the million innocents suffer.

* * *

In an earlier column I protested against American soldiers in Honolulu giving military burial to a Japanese soldier. There were some readers who kicked me around in letters for such an attitude.

There are sure to be some Americans who will howl and scream at the idea of inconveniencing America's Japanese population in order to prevent sabotage and espionage.

Okay, let them howl. Let them howl timber-wolf-type. Our government has told us we face war. All-out war. It has told us that we are up against the roughest days in our history. It has demanded of us sacrifice and sweat and toil and all the other of Mr. Churchill's graphic words.

That's all right, we will answer. But let us have no patience with the enemy or with anyone whose veins carry his blood.

Let us in this desperate time put first things first. And, who is to say that to the men and women of this country there is anything that comes above America?

Personally, I hate the Japanese. And that goes for all of them.

Let's quit worrying about hurting the enemy's feelings and start doing it.

MORE PLAIN TALK

Author: Walt Woodward
Bainbridge Island Review
February 5, 1942

The time has come to bear out the truth of our words, written two months ago in an extra edition of The Review published the day after Hawaii was bombed. We spoke of an American recoil to Japanese treachery and wrote:

"And in such recoil of sentiment there is danger of a blind, wild, hysterical hatred of all persons who can trace ancestry to Japan."

Up and down the Pacific Coast, in the newspapers, and in the halls of Congress are the words of hatred now for all Japanese, whether they be citizens of America. These words reached a shrieking crescendo when Henry McLemore, with all the intelligence of a blind pig, wrote in the Seattle Times: "Personally, I hate the Japanese. And that goes for all of them."

That may be patriotism of a hysterical degree; but it certainly isn't the kind of patriotism that will win the war. Let us think, for a moment, what would happen if the government should adopt Mr. McLemore's fervid plea for the "immediate removal of every Japanese on the West Coast to a point deep in the interior. I don't mean a nice part of the interior, either."

Just who would grow our fruits and vegetables if Mr. McLemore's advice is followed? We have no figures before us, but it certainly is an apparent fact that the bulk of our produce and, we dare say, the bulk of the produce grown for our Army and Navy encampments on the West Coast come from Japanese gardens. The economy of one-third of the nation would be thrown into utter confusion if all Japanese were herded into the interior.

But what of another factor--the wreckage that it would bring to lives of thousands and thousands of loyal American citizens who can't avoid ancestry in Japan?

For who--besides those so blind as Mr. McLemore--can say that the big majority of our American-Japanese citizens are not loyal to the land of their birth--the United States? Their record bespeaks nothing but loyalty: Their sons are in our Army; they are heavy contributors to the Red Cross and to the defense bond drive. Even in Hawaii, was there any record of any Japanese-American citizen being other than intensely loyal?

The Review argues only with Mr. McLemore and his ilk. It will not dispute the federal government if it, in its considered wisdom, calls for the removal from the Coast of all Japanese.

Such order--which we hope will not come--will be based on military necessities and not on hatred.

Japanese people, whether citizens or aliens, must prepare themselves for what may seem to them unfair and unreasoning treatment. But if they value their American citizenship and the right to live in this free nation, they must stand fast in their loyalty. American boys--including some of their sons--are giving their lives for Liberty. Any other sacrifice is not too great.

Today And Tomorrow

By Walter Lippmann

The Fifth Column On The Coast

New York Tribune

February 12, 1942

SAN FRANCISCO. The enemy alien problem on the Pacific Coast, or much more accurately the Fifth Column problem, is very serious and it is very special. What makes it so serious, and so special is that the Pacific Coast is in imminent danger of a combined attack from within and from without. The danger is not, as it would be in the inland centers or perhaps even for the present on the Atlantic Coast, from sabotage alone. The peculiar danger of the Pacific Coast is in a Japanese raid accompanied by enemy action inside American territory.

This combination can be very formidable indeed. For while the striking power of Japan from the sea and air might not in itself be overwhelming at any one point just now, Japan could strike a blow which might do irreparable damage if it were accompanied by the kind of organized sabotage to which this part of the country is specially vulnerable.

This is a sober statement of the situation, in fact a report, based not on speculation but on what is known to have taken place and to be taking place in this area of the war. It is a fact that the Japanese navy has been reconnoitering the Pacific Coast more or less continually and for a considerable period of time, testing and feeling out the American defenses. It is a fact that communication takes place between the enemy at sea and enemy agents on land.

These are facts which we shall ignore or minimize at our peril. It is also a fact that since the outbreak of the Japanese war there has been no important sabotage on the Pacific Coast.

From what we know about Hawaii and about the Fifth Column in Europe this is not, as some have liked to think, a sign that there is nothing to be feared. It is a sign that the blow is well-organized and that it is held back until it can be struck with maximum effect.

Naval Intelligence Memo (excerpt)

Lt. Commander Ringle, Office of Naval Intelligence, February 1942

(a) That within the last eight or ten years the entire "Japanese question" in the United States has reversed itself. The alien menace is no longer paramount, and is becoming of less importance almost daily, as the original alien immigrants grow older and die, and as more and more of their American-born children reach maturity. The primary present and future problem is that of dealing with those American-born United States citizens of Japanese ancestry, of whom it is considered that least seventy-five per cent are loyal to the United States. The ratio of those American citizens of Japanese ancestry to alien-born Japanese in the United States is at present almost 3 to 1, and rapidly increasing.

(b) That of the Japanese-born alien residents, the large majority are at least passively loyal to the United States. That is, they would knowingly do nothing whatever to the injury of the United States, but at the same time would not do anything to the injury of Japan. Also, most of the remainder would not engage in active sabotage or insurrection, but might well do surreptitious observation work for Japanese interests if given a convenient opportunity.

(c) That, however, there are among the Japanese both alien and United States citizens, certain individuals, either deliberately placed by the Japanese government or actuated by a fanatical loyalty to that country, who would act as saboteurs or agents. This number is estimated to be less than three per cent of the total, or about 3500 in the entire United States.

(d) That of the persons mentioned in (c) above, the most dangerous are either already in custodial detention or are members or such organizations as the Black Dragon Society, the Kaigan Kyokai (Navy League), or the Hoimusha Kai (Military Service Men's League), or affiliated groups. The membership of these groups is already fairly well known to the Naval Intelligence service or the Federal Bureau of Investigation and should immediately be placed in custodial detention, irrespective of whether they are alien or citizen. (See references (c) and (f).

(e) That, as a basic policy tending toward the permanent solution of this problem, the American citizens of Japanese ancestry should be officially encouraged in their efforts toward loyalty and acceptance as bona fide citizens; that they be accorded a place in the national effort through such agencies as the Red Cross, U.S.O. civilian defense production activities, even though subject to greater investigative checks as to background and loyalty, etc., than Caucasian Americans.

(f) That in spite of paragraph (e) above, the most potentially dangerous element of all are these American citizens of Japanese ancestry who have spent the formative years of their lives, from 10 to 20, in Japan and have returned to the United States to claim their American citizenship within the last few years. These people are essentially and inherently Japanese and may have been deliberately sent back to the United States by the Japanese government to act as agents. In

spite of their legal citizenship and the protection afforded them by the Bill of Rights, they should be looked upon as enemy aliens and many of them placed in custodial detention. This group numbers between 600 and 700 in the Los Angeles metropolitan area and at least that many in other parts of Southern California.

(g) That the writer heartily agrees with the reports submitted by Mr. Munson, (reference (b) of this report.)

(h) That, in short, the entire "Japanese Problem" has been magnified out of its true proportion, largely because of the physical characteristics of the people; that it is no more serious than the problems of the German, Italian, and Communistic portions of the United States population, and, finally that it should be handled on the basis of the individual, regardless of citizenship, and not on a racial basis.

Office of the Attorney General
Washington, D.C.

February 17, 1942

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

For several weeks there have been increasing demands for evacuation of all Japanese, aliens and citizens alike, from the West Coast states. A great many of the West Coast people distrust the Japanese, various special interests would welcome their removal from good farm land and the elimination of their competition, some of the local California radio and press have demanded evacuation, the West Coast Congressional Delegation are asking the same thing and finally, Walter Lippman and Westbrook Pegler recently have taken up the evacuation cry on the ground that attack on the West Coast and widespread sabotage is imminent. My last advice from the War Department is that there is no evidence of imminent attack and from the F.B.I. that there is no evidence of planned sabotage.

In view of the fact that you may be asked about it at your press conference, or may wish to say something about the steps being taken, I am supplying you with the facts.

I have designated as a prohibited area every area recommended to me by the Secretary of War, through whom the Navy recommendations are also made. The less populated areas are already in effect and the remainder have been designated to be evacuated by February 24. I have also designated a number of restricted areas in which alien enemies may live only under rigorous curfew and other restrictions.

We are proceeding as fast as possible. To evacuate the 93,000 Japanese in California over night would materially disrupt agricultural production in which they play a large part and the farm labor now is so limited that they could not be quickly replaced. Their hurried evacuation would require thousands of troops, tie up transportation and raise very difficult questions of resettlement. Under the Constitution 60,000 of these Japanese are American citizens. If complete confusion and lowering of morale is to be avoided, so large a job must be done after careful planning. The army has not yet advised me of its conclusion in the matter.

There is no dispute between the War, Navy and Justice Departments. The practical and legal limits of this Department's authority which is restricted to alien enemies are clearly understood. The Army is considering what further steps it wishes to recommend.

It is extremely dangerous for the columnists, acting as "Armchair Strategists and Junior G-Men," to suggest that an attack on the West Coast and planned sabotage is imminent when the military

authorities and the F.B.I. have indicated that this is not the fact. It comes close to shouting FIRE! in the theater; and if race riots occur, these writers will bear a heavy responsibility. Either Lippman has information which the War Department and the F.B.I. apparently do not have, or is acting with dangerous irresponsibility.

It would serve to clarify the situation in the public mind if you see fit to mention it.

Respectfully,

[Signed] Francis Biddle
Attorney General

Letter from Secretary of War Henry Stimson to U. S. House of Representatives Majority Leader John McCormack

July 8, 1942

PERSONAL

Dear Mr. McCormack:

given careful consideration to your letter of June 28, 1942, enclosing a letter from Mr. Charles F. Ayer in which he discusses the seriousness of the Japanese situation in the Territory of Hawaii. I am glad to be able to report that this matter has been under continuous study since December 7, 1941 and everything possible is being done to solve the problem in a satisfactory manner.

Our greatest difficulty in dealing with this problem is the economic aspect. The Japanese population is so interwoven into the economic fabric of the Islands that if we attempted to evacuate all Japanese aliens and citizens all business, including that concerned with the building up of our defenses, would practically stop. The critical shipping situation precludes the movement of replacement labor from the mainland. Furthermore, the Japanese who now occupy positions are experienced, whereas replacement labor would lack this experience.

Those American citizens of Japanese ancestry considered actively dangerous are interned in Hawaii, while those that are considered potentially dangerous are to be evacuated to the Mainland for resettlement. All enemy aliens about whom there is the slightest suspicion are returned to the Mainland for internment.

I appreciate your interest in calling this matter to my attention and I am sure you realize the confidential nature of the information given above.

Sincerely,

(SIGNED) HENRY L. STIMSON
Secretary of War

Honorable John W. McCormack
Majority Leader
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.