My dear Mr. Secretary:

It is my understanding that persons of Japanese descent are not acceptable for service in the Navy or in the Marine Corps.

The record of Japanese Americans in the Army, notably the 100th Infantry Battalion which is serving with the Fifth Army in Italy, demonstrates eloquently the fundamental loyalty of these men, and their competence as fighters. When the opportunity was offered to volunteer for a combat team in the Army, in January 1943, the volunteers numbered more than twice as many as could be accepted. On January 21, 1944, the War Department announced that Japanese Americans thereafter would be inducted into the Army through the Selective Service system.

I suggest that the present policy of the Navy Department be reviewed, and weighed against the advantages to be gained from making service in the Navy and in the Marine Corps open to all loyal Americans regardless of their ancestry. Among the advantages which should be considered are:

1. Manpower. There are probably 25,000 Japanese Americans of military age on the mainland and an even greater number in Hawaii.

2. It is highly important that the enemy be deprived of any basis for charging that the United States preaches democracy but practices race discrimination.

3. The loyalty of nearly 800,000 American citizens of Japanese descent can be greatly influenced by the attitude of the government. I do not believe that loyalty can thrive in an atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion.

I sincerely hope that, after consideration of all aspects of the problem, you will find it desirable to open the way for Americans of Japanese descent to serve in any branch of service under your supervision.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd.) HAROLD L. ICKES
Secretary of the Interior.

Hon. Frank Knox,
Secretary of the Navy.