COMMONWEALTH CLUB PLAN

Disjunction of Military Command in Total War in the Pacific States

The Commonwealth Club of California presents a proposal concerning that part of total war in the Pacific Coast States which consists of fighting off raiding commandos, parachutists, and fifth columnists attacking means of communication and plants for war production, power, lighting, water supply, and the like.

We propose that the War Department, without further legislation, exercise its power to persuade or conscript the men of organizing ability to create and command an army for such internal warfare out of the rank and file already conscripted, who are outside the standards set for combat service.

It assumes that such an internal army in California or any Pacific State could be organized in coordination and without substantial interference with the training of combat troops—certainly less than the states would cause in attempting a competitive organization at the same time.

We assume it to be axiomatic that if the federal government, with the power of conscription and commandeering, cannot organize such an army, it is a mere political evasion to attempt to place the responsibility on the states. They can neither effectively conscript nor commandeer (granting they could do so at all) around the edges of the federal exercise of those powers.
On behalf of Californians, it protests against the plan of the War Department of divided command of fighting men, as we understand it to be declared by General DeWitt on March 11, 1942, when he called on Twelfth District individuals, municipalities, and states to provide organizations to defend areas and plants vital to war efforts and stated: "If we yield to pressure to provide federal troops for guarding numerous important installations, we shall not be fulfilling obligation to build a mobile army prepared to carry our fight to the enemy."

The Shaming of the White Man to the Yellow and Brown. The California Coastal Fog Bank.

Our protest assumes that the twenty-five to forty mile wide coastal fog bank extending some 500 miles from below Cape Sur to above Cape Blanco will make its customary return for the period from late May to September.

It is willing to assume that the Navy knows as much about the varying drifts of a fleet or of plane carriers in the currents in that fog as do the Japanese naval men who have been studying it in their fishing boats for a couple of decades—or the bootleg skippers who used it as a screen.

It assumes the Army and Navy is doing its best to minimize the number of raiding planes or commandos which have broken through all defense heretofore.

We assume that all in authority know the propaganda value to Japan for the Chinese and East Indians of a successful
raid on the Pacific States, destroying our essential plants and in all likelihood including the burning of one or more of our coast cities. That is, the shaming of the white man beginning with the bombing of the "Panay" through the victories in the South Pacific and Indian Ocean which would culminate in striking him even across the Pacific on the American continent.

All our so-called "social gains" are embodied in our youth. A captive private just out of the high school shrieking in the torture of a slow public bayonetting to impress the Malay and Chinese of our inferiority is an incident of Japanese propaganda also impressive to Californians. Though some of our politicians ignore it, we knew what war in the Orient means before the weeks of the rape of Nanking. We know of the efficiency of an intelligent, determined and powerful people unified for a conquest of both shores of the Pacific by force in all its forms.

Incidentally we know, contrary to the impression of one high in authority, that the California sportsmen have several hundred thousand sporting rifles and shotguns available to federal commandeering for the purpose of arming such federal forces. The location of these arms is disclosed through the licensing system.

We also assume that no general officer will contend that what is immediately necessary for internal warfare in the Pacific Coast States must be provided for Illinois, Colorado and North Carolina. Even after Bataan there are academic political dreamers who are still thinking of equality in state rights--
that is, as if Vicksburg, Manassas, Bull Run, Seven Pines, and the Monitor and Merrimac were all identical in strategy and tactics.

**Analysis of Proposal of Divided Federal and State Command in California**

**Legalistic Military Futility**

Our protest considers the War Department plan of disjunctive command, as it is in California, from two standpoints.

1. Assuming the State had not been castrated by federal conscription (which holds apart even the combat rejects) and to have the power (which it has not) to conscript the best of its citizens and to commandeer rifles, shotguns and pistols to arm them to repel its raiding enemies, the disjunction from the federal command of scattered military units under various state commands would not work.

   We are informed that it took two years to obtain unity of command of the British Army and Navy in the defense of the coast of the British Isles. If California now had an army or several small armies of its own, efficiently officered, we still could expect the destructive lack of unity shown in Britain.

2. Legalistic futility. Our second consideration of the Army's proposed disjunctive command concerns what we regard as its legalistic futility. It assumes that the private owners, cities, water districts, counties, and the state will convert their peace-time obligation and function to maintain public
order into military effectiveness for battling with raiders.

It is a condition the Japanese will seek to destroy in California—not a thesis on constitutional obligations.

(a)* A California State army with a tragically pathetic commander in chief. California has a State guard, beginning to be organized, consisting of children and elderly men, persons necessarily outside the draft. This army has an upper limit of 7,000. But 5,000 of the limited eligibles have enlisted. It makes medical provision only for traumatic injuries. That is to say, if a Los Angeles boy contracts pneumonia in guarding the Golden Gate bridge, he may return home 400 miles away for nursing and treatment at his own expense.

This for repelling attacks on plants requiring somewhere in the neighborhood of 50,000 fighting men to defend them!

California has a governor, in a campaign for his reelection, whose warlike character and political capacity is evidenced by the following facts. In January last, he asked his legislature for an army of 25,000 but was unable to procure appropriations for more than 7,000. This was in a session after Pearl Harbor and the bombing and destruction of Repulse and the Prince of Wales. That legislature adjourned in January. Since then the Japanese have taken Malaya, Singapore, Batavia, the Dutch East Indies, the Philippines, Rangoon, and much of Burma, and they have driven the European as far toward the South Pole.

* The statements in this subsection (a) concerning the governor have not been authorized by the Commonwealth Club. They are those of a member of his party who helped to elect him.
as suits their present convenience. The 500 mile long summer fog bank is but a month away. With this, the certitude of the bombing plane, the parachutists and the commandos.

The State and its legislators are shuddering under this menace. Yet, within a fortnight, the governor has stated that he will not convene the legislature and ask for a State army adequate at least in number.

Our war (sic) governor has publicly stated his reason. It is that if he calls a session, California will not create any larger force than was given in last January, and all that would happen would be political accusation and recrimination. This, obviously, before his campaign for re-election. The governor is right. There would be bitter comment on his delay from Batavia to the coastal fogs.

(b) Individual plant soldiers to fight the Japanese troops or fifth columnists. Despite General DeWitt's call on the individual utility owners to provide their bodies of fighting men to repel attacks on their plants, they regard this as a federal or state function. They think of their rates, established by the State, which provide no funds to fight Japanese.

The example of one association of water supply plants is sufficient. In each is one deputy sheriff, presumably above the conscription age. As a Californian put it in his vernacular, "A swell time for that flabby dewlapped deputy outside the great power house, when he lifts his coat lapel and shows his sheriff's..."
badge and says to half a dozen Jap parachutists with tommy guns, 'Come along, you fellows. You are under arrest.'"

(c) Cities and counties discuss bond issues for soldiers and police for next year. San Francisco is fire conscious remembering its conflagration of 1906. It expects and dreads another, and after a laggard political year, has proceeded vigorously to organize its fire wardens.

Despite this, the city is relying on part-time volunteers to fight parachutists or commandos seeking to throw bombs in their telephone substations. These substations are essential to communications to fight the not unlikely 500 simultaneous fires from the 10,000 incendiary bombs from one plane carrier dropped on its wooden buildings, in its daily northwest trade winds.

Maybe six months or a year from now we will vote a bond issue. Our politicians discuss it with an eye on the taxpayers' vote. But whether for our starving evacuees from a burned city or for future additions to our police, we are not sure. To the low-grade politician what Sherman said about war is true. It so puzzles one about votes.

Conclusion

It is time to forget politics and conduct a total war. Babbling candidates should drop the old slogans. We cannot meet the weapons and tactics of the Japanese and Germans with part-time "home guards" and "embattled farmers." The blue lumps over their armpits from their first shot with military rifles are so painful!
It is a time for federal soldiers who will stand day and night around a great power plant waiting for the most dangerous of fighting—the surprise attack of determined soldiers. Discipline for that dreary and trying service must have the federal guardhouse for the recalcitrant and the federal army's esprit de corps for the high spirited.