

April 15, 1942

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

In Re Evacuees and The Attorney General's
Memorandum to the President of April 9, 1942.

I.
WEST COAST

1. The evacuation by the Army, thus far, has been highly successful. There have been no disorders and a very serious danger is being successfully removed.

2. The evacuees after being classified in various Assembly Centers, are being moved to Reception Centers, of which there are now three, i.e., Owens Valley, Parker Dam and Gila Indian Reservation, and about four more are contemplated. They are being protected and controlled by the Army in Assembly Centers preparatory to their permanent relocation at Reception Centers, where they will remain under Federal supervision and protection. They will also remain under Army protection in the Reception Centers until the control of the Reception Centers is undertaken by the War Relocation Authority when, presumably, they will continue to be protected by some Federal supervision.

3. At this point in the process, however, when they are to be turned over to Mr. Eisenhower for relocation and assimilation into the general population, difficulty is met from the very sharp opposition of the communities where it is intended to take them.

4. We think this present opposition, which is quite hot, may die down because there is demand for their labor, viz., in the sugar districts of Utah, Colorado and Montana and other places. As time goes on, we think there will be further demands and that the prejudice will gradually die down. At all events, it must be handled constructively and firmly, and in the meantime they must remain under the general control of the Army. These people are potential assets of the country who ought to be used now when labor is scarce and not to be made a political football. Our efforts are directed now to the problem of their evacuation

and the utilization of their labor at the earliest practicable moment.

At present most of these people are in the hands of the Army as relatively few were voluntarily evacuated.

5. We started out by the method of encouraging voluntary evacuation in order to minimize the hardship to the evacuees. We have been obliged owing to the acute hostility of the people in the localities into which the evacuees were going, to supersede this voluntary method by the control and regulation of the Army.

6. As a whole, this problem on the West Coast, which has been a very ticklish and dangerous problem from every standpoint, has been admirably handled by General Dewitt under the advice of the War Department. It has been full of dynamite on both sides--real potential danger of sabotage and real danger of intolerance and abuse on the other.

7. The War Department is studying carefully the general solution of this problem under competent civilian advisers whom we have called in to help us. During the interval of, at least, five or six weeks while we are completing the Japanese evacuation, we are studying the problem of the German and Italian aliens, which is a national and not a local problem. In this connection we are working closely with the Department of Justice. During that interval we are alleviating the harshness of curfew regulations in respect to German and Italian aliens in dangerous spots by a system of permits and blank exemptions.

II.

EAST COAST

8. No such mass evacuation of aliens on the East Coast as is suggested by Mr. Biddle's memorandum of April 9 is either under way or contemplated. Limited evacuations from particularly critical areas are being studied. No moves of this character have as yet been made. Certainly, we shall take no serious steps there without consultation with his Department.

III.

INTERMENT OF JAPANESE CITIZENS FROM
HAWAII.

9. On March 13, 1942, the President approved a proposal by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which I had not previously seen, that there should be an evacuation of suspicious citizens from Hawaii to be placed in concentration camps on the mainland of the United States. A few such evacuees have been sent over from Hawaii. Their case has been taken up by the Civil Liberties Union and habeas corpus writs are contemplated. The Department has examined into the evidence or lack of evidence as to the dangerous character of these particular persons and I am satisfied that they cannot be held in confinement under the present legal situation in this country. As there are relatively few involved as yet, we are considering returning them to Hawaii where martial law exists and they can be detained. In order for such a movement as was contemplated by the memorandum of March 13, aforesaid, it will be necessary in my opinion for you to suspend in some degree the writ of habeas corpus and institute such a situation in this country as would be similar to that created by the Defense of the Realm Act in Great Britain. General Emons thinks that such evacuations in the future may be important for the safety of Hawaii. I, myself, have heard you mention the possible coming of a campaign of concerted sabotage made in connection with a simultaneous attack upon our frontiers from without. If such a concerted attack should be made, I believe that such a legal step as the Defense of the Realm Act must be taken.

HENRY L. STIMSON

Secretary of War