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Ringle Report on Japanese Internment

Serial No. 01742316 30 December 1941

From: Chief of Naval Operations

To: Commandant, Eleventh Naval District.

Subject: Report and Suggestions regarding handling Japanese Question on West Coast by C.B. Munson, dated December 20, 1941, Los Angeles, California.

1. Copy of subject report was forwarded to the District Intelligence Officer, Eleventh Naval District, on December 27, 1941. On page two, paragraph three of subject report Mr. Munson states that "your observer must note without fear or favor that 99% of the most intelligent views on the Japanese, by military, official and civil contacts in Honolulu and the mainland, was best crystallized by two intelligence men before the outbreak of the war. These two men are Lieutenant Commander K.D. Ringle of the 11th Naval District in Los Angeles and Mr. Shivers in Honolulu of the F.B.I."

1. The Chief of Naval Operations desires a report from Lieutenant K.D. Ringle concerning his views on the Japanese referred to in Mr. Munson's report.

/s/ J.B.W. WALLER,
by direction.

FIRST ENDORSEMENT

29 January 1942

From: The Commandant, Eleventh Naval District.

To: The Chief of Naval Operations.

Subject: Japanese Question, Report on.

Ref.: (a) (SC) A8-2/EF37 OP-16-B-&/RB A8-5/EF Serial No.01742316 Report and Suggestions regarding handling Japanese Question on West Coast by C.B. Munson, dated December 20, 1941, Los Angeles, California.

Encl (A) Report on Japanese Question by Lieut. Comdr. K.D. Ringle, USN (2 copies).

1. In accordance with provisions of paragraph 2, Reference (a) , Enclosure (A) is forwarded.

/s/ R.S. HOLMES

BIO/ND11/EF37/A8-5 Serial LA1055/re 26 JAN 1942

From: Lieutenant Commander K.D. RINGLE, USN.
To: The Chief of Naval Operations.
Via: The Commandant, Eleventh Naval District.
Subject: Japanese Question, Report on.

Reference (a) OpNav ltr file (SC) A8-5/EF37 Op-16-B-7/RB A8-5/EF37 Serial No. 01742316 of 12/30/41.

(b) Reports of Mr. C. B. Munson, Special Representative of the State Department, on Japanese on the West Coast, dated Nov. 7, 1941, and Dec. 20, 1941.

(c) NNI 119 Report, file BIO/ND11/EF37/A8-2, serial LA/861 of 3/27/41, subject-NISEI.

(d) NNI 119 Report, file BIO/ND11/EF37/A8-2, serial LA5223 of 11/4/41, subject-NISEI.

(e) NNI 119 Report, file BIO-LA/ND11/EF37/P8-2, serial LA/6524 of 12/12/41, subject-HEDUSHA-KAI.

(f) NNI 119 Report, file BIO-LA/ND11/EF37/P8-2, serial LA/417 of 1/5/42, subject-KIBEI Organizations and Activities.

(g) Dept. of Commerce Bulletin, Series P-3, Number 23, dated 12/9/41.

Enclosure (A) Transcripts of J.B. Hughes' broadcasts of Jan. 5,6,7,9,15,19, and 20, 1942.

(B) F.B.I., L.A. Report re Japanese Activities, Los Angeles, dated Jan. 20, 1942.

1. In accordance with paragraph 2 of reference (a) , the following views and opinions with supporting facts and statements are submitted.

I OPINIONS.

The following opinions, amplified in succeeding paragraphs, are held by the writer:

(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 these of whom it is considered that least seventy-five percent are loyal to the United States. The ratio of these 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 what ever to the injury of the United States, but at the same time would not do anything to the injury of Japan. Also, most 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 300 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 of such organizations as the Black Dragon Society, the Kaigun Kyokai (Navy League) , or the Heimusha Iai (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 (e) 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, and even such activities as ship and aircraft building or other 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 (c) above, the most potentially dangerous element of all are those 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 legal 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.

(i) That the above opinions are and will continue to be true just so long as these people, Issei and Nisei, are given an opportunity to be self-supporting, but that if conditions continue in the trend they appear to be taking as of this date; i.e., loss of employment and income due to anti-Japanese agitation by and among Caucasian Americans, continued personal attacks by Filipinos and other racial groups, denial of relief

funds to desperately needy cases, cancellation of licenses for markets, produce houses, stores, etc., by California State authorities, discharges from jobs by the wholesale, unnecessarily harsh restrictions on travel, including discriminatory regulations against all Nisei preventing them from engaging in commercial fishing--there will most certainly be outbreaks of sabotage, riots, and other civil strife in the not too distant future.

II BACKGROUND.

(1) In order that the qualifications of the writer to express the above opinions may be clearly understood, his background of acquaintance with this problem is set forth.

(a) Three years' study of the Japanese language and the Japanese people as a naval language student attached to the United States Embassy in Tokyo from 1923 to 1931.

(b) One year's duty as Assistant District Intelligence Officer, Fourteenth Naval District (Hawaii) from July 1936 to July 1937.

(c) Duty as Assistant District Intelligence Officer, Eleventh Naval District, in charge of Naval Intelligence matters in Los Angeles and vicinity from July 1940 to the present time.(2) As a result of the above, the writer has over the last several years developed a very great interest in the problem of the Japanese in America, particularly with regard to the future position of the United States citizen of Japanese ancestry, and has sought contact with certain of their leaders. He has likewise discussed the matter widely with many Caucasian Americans who have lived with the problem for years. As a result, the writer believes firmly that the only ultimate solution is as outlined in paragraphs I(e) and I (h) above; namely, to deliberately and officially encourage the American citizen of Japanese ancestry in his efforts to be a loyal citizen and to help him to be so accepted by the general public.

III ELABORATION OF OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN PARAGRAPH I. (1) For purposes of brevity and clearness, four Japanese words in common use by Americans as well as Japanese in referring to these people will be explained. Hereafter these words will be used where appropriate. ISSEI (pronounced ee-say) meaning "first generation." Used to refer to those who were born in Japan; hence, alien Japanese in the United States. NISEI (pronounced nee-say meaning "second generation." Used for those children of ISSEI born in the United States. SANSEI (pronounced san-say) meaning "third generation." Children of NISEI. KIBEI (pronounced kee-bay) meaning "returned to America." Refers to those NISEI who spent all or a large portion of their lives in Japan and who have now returned to the United States. (2) The one statement in paragraph I(a) above which appears to need elaboration is that seventy-five per cent or more of the Nisei are loyal United States citizens. This point was explained at some length in references (c) and (d). The opinion was formed largely through personal contact with the Nisei themselves and their chief organization, the Japanese American Citizens League. It was also formed through interviews with many people in government circles, law-enforcement officers, businessmen, etc., who have dealt with them over a period of many years. There are several conclusive proofs of this statement which can be advance. These are--(a) The action taken by the Japanese American Citizens League in convention in Santa Ana, California, on January 11, 1942. This convention voted to require the following oath to be taken, signed, and notarized by every member of that organization as a prerequisite for membership for

the year 1942, and for all members taken into the organization in the future "I, _____, do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I hereby renounce any other allegiances which I may have knowingly or unknowingly held in the past; and that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion. So help me God." (b) Many of the Nisei leaders have voluntarily contributed valuable anti-subversive information to this and other governmental agencies. (See reference (d) and enclosure (B)). (c) That the Japanese Consular staff, leaders of the Central Japanese Association, and others who are known to have been sympathetic to the Japanese cause do not themselves trust the Nisei. (d) That a very great many of the Nisei have taken legal steps through the Japanese Consulate and the Government of Japan to officially divest themselves of Japanese citizenship (dual citizenship) , even though by so doing they become legally dead in the eye of the Japanese law, and are no longer eligible to inherit any property which they or their family may have held in Japan. This opinion is further amplified in references (c) and (d). (3) The opinion expressed in paragraph I (b) above is based on the following: The last Issei who legally entered the United States did so in 1924. Most of them arrived before that time; therefore, these people have been in the United States at least eighteen years, or most of their adult life. They have their businesses and livelihoods here. Most of them are aliens only because the laws of the United States do not permit them to become naturalized. They have raised their children, the Nisei mentioned in paragraph (1) above, in the United States; many of them have some in the United States army. Exact figures are not available, but the local Military Intelligence office estimates that approximately five thousand Nisei in the State of California have entered the United States army as a result of the Selective Service Act. It does not seem reasonable that these aliens under the above conditions would form an organized group for armed insurrection or organized sabotage. Insofar as numbers go, there are only 48,697 alien Japanese in the eight western states. The following paragraph quoted from an Associated Press dispatch from Washington referring to the registration of enemy aliens is considered most significant on this point "The group which must register first comprises the 135,843 enemy aliens in the western command--Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. The group includes 26,255 Germans, 60,905 Italians, and 48,697 Japanese." It is assumed that the foregoing figures are based either on the 1940 census or the alien registration which was taken the latter part of 1940. There are two factors which must be considered in this group of aliens: First, the group includes a sizeable number of "technical" aliens; that is, those who, although Japanese born and therefore legally aliens, entered the United States in infancy, grew up here, and are at heart American citizens. Second, the parents of the Kibei, mentioned in paragraph I (f) , should be considered as those who are most loyal to Japan, since they themselves are the ones who sent their children to be educated and brought up entirely in the Japanese manner. (4) Paragraph I(c) needs no further elaboration. (5) Paragraph I (d) has been elaborated at length in references (c) and (f). (6) Elaboration of paragraph I(e). The United States recognizes these American-born Orientals as citizens, extends the franchise to them, drafts them for military service, forces them to pay taxes, perform jury duty, etc., and extends to them the complete protection afforded by the Constitution and Bill of Rights, and yet at the same time has viewed them with considerable suspicion and distrust, and so far as it is known to the writer, has made no particular effort to develop their loyalty to the United States, other than to permit them to attend public schools. They are segregated as to where they may live by zoning laws, discriminated against in employment and wages, and rebuffed in nearly all their efforts to prove their loyalty to the United States, yet at the same time those of them who grow to about the age of 16

years in the United States and then go to Japan for a few years of education find themselves viewed with more suspicion and distrust in that country than they ever were in the United States, and the majority of them return after a short time thoroughly disillusioned with Japan and more than ever loyal to the United States. It is submitted that the only practical permanent solution of this problem is to indoctrinate and absorb these people, accept them as an integral part of the United States population, even though they remain a racial minority, and officially extend to them the rights and privileges of citizenship, as well as demanding of them the duties and obligations. Furthermore, if some such steps are not taken, the field for proselytizing and propaganda among them is left entirely to Japanese interests acting through Consulates, Consular agents, so-called "cultural societies", athletic clubs, Buddhist and Shinto priests--who through a quirk in the United States immigration laws may and have entered the country freely, regardless of exclusion laws or quota as "ministers of religion"--trade treaty aliens, steamship and travel agencies, "goodwill" missions, etc. It is well known to the writer that his acquaintance with and encouragement of Nisei Leaders in their efforts towards Americanization was a matter of considerable concern to the former Japanese Consul at Los Angeles. It is submitted that the Nisei could be accorded a place in the national war effort without risk or danger and that such a step would go farther than anything else towards cementing their loyalty to the United States. Because of their physical characteristics they would be most easily observed, far easier than doubtful citizens of the Caucasian race, such as naturalized Germans, Italians, or native-born Communists. They would, of course, be subject to the same or more stringent checks as background that the Caucasians before they were employed. (7) No elaboration is considered necessary for paragraphs I (f) , I (g) , and I (h). (8) Elaboration of paragraph I (I). The opinion outlined in this paragraph is considered most serious and most urgent. There already exists a great deal of economic distress due to such war conditions as frozen credits and accounts, loss of employment, closing of businesses, restrictions on travel, etc. This condition is growing worse daily as the savings of most of the alien-dominated families are being used up. As an example, the following census, taken by missionary interests, of alien families in the fishing village on terminal Island is submitted: "How long can you maintain your family without work?" Immediate attention--9 families// 1 month--52 families// 2 months--64 families// 3 months--81 families// 4 months--32 families// 5 months--20 families// 6 to 10 months--129 families// Over 10 months--90 families// Total 477 families. Large numbers of people, both Issei and Nisei, are idle now, and their number is growing. Children are beginning to be unable to attend school through lack of food and clothing. There have been already incipient riots brought about by unprovoked attacks by Filipinos on persons of the Japanese race, regardless of citizenship. There is a great deal of indiscriminate anti-Japanese agitation stirring the white population by such people as Lail Kane, former Naval Reserve officer, James Young, Hearst correspondent, in his series of lectures, and John B. Hughes, radio commentator, transcripts of whose broadcasts are submitted as enclosure (A). There are just enough half truths in these articles and statements to render them exceedingly dangerous and to arouse a tremendous amount of violent anti-Japanese feeling among Caucasians of all classes who are not thoroughly informed as to the situation. It is noted that in these broadcasts, lecture, etc., there are no distinction made what ever between the actual members of the Japanese military forces in Japan and the second and third generation citizens of Japanese ancestry born and brought up in the United States. It must also be remembered that many of the persons and groups agitating anti-Japanese sentiment against the Issei and Nisei have done so for some time from ulterior motives--notable is the anti-Japanese agitation by the Jugo-Slav fishermen who frankly desire to eliminate competition in the fishing industry. It is further

noted that according to the local press, Congressman Leland M. Ford has introduced a bill in Congress providing for the removal and interment in concentration camps of all citizens and residents of Japanese extraction, which according to the census figures would amount to about 127,000 people of all ages and sexes in the continental United States, plus an additional 158,000 in Hawaii and other territories and possessions, excluding the Philippines. (See reference (g) for population breakdown). It is submitted that such a proposition is not only unwarranted but very unwise, since it would undoubtedly alienate the loyalty to the United States, would add the extra burden of supporting and guarding these people to the war effort, would disrupt many essential businesses, notably that of the growing and supplying of food stuffs, and would probably cause a widespread outbreak of sabotage and riot.

IV RECOMMENDATIONS. (1) Based on the above opinions, the following recommendations for the handling of this situation are submitted: (a) Provide some means whereby potentially dangerous United States citizens may be held in custodial detention as well as aliens. It is submitted that in a military "theater of operations"--which at present includes all the West coast--this might be done by review of individual cases by boards composed of members of Military Intelligence, Naval Intelligence, and the Department of Justice. (b) Under the provisions of (a) above, hold in custodial detention such United States citizens as dangerous Kibei or German, Italian, or other subversive sympathizers and agitators as are deemed dangerous to the internal security of the United States. (c) Similar procedure to be followed in cases of aliens-not only Japanese, but other aliens of whatever nationality, whether so-called "friendly" aliens or not. This suggestion is made since it is believed that there exist other aliens-Spanish, Mexican, Portuguese, Slavonian, French, etc. who are active Axis sympathizers. (d) Other suggestions as listed in reference (a). (e) In the cases of persons held in custodial detention, whether alien or citizen, see that some definite provision is made for the support of their dependent families. This could be done by: (1) Releasing certain specified amounts from these people's "frozen" funds monthly for the support of these dependents. (2) Making definite provisions through relief funds for the support of such dependents, so that they will not become either public charges or embittered against the United States, and them selves dangerous to the internal peace and security of the country. (f) In the interest of national unity and internal peace and security some measures should be instituted to restrain agitators of both radio and press who are attempting to arouse sentiment and bring about action-private, local, state, and national, official and unofficial, against these people on the basis of race alone, completely neglecting background, training, and citizenship.

K. D. RINGLE.

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