

December 22, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

In compliance with your request of today, I instructed the Agent in Charge of the FBI at San Francisco to contact immediately General DeWitt relative to the request that had been made by General DeWitt, the Ninth Army Corps Commander, that aliens be kept under surveillance by police authorities in the Ninth Army Corps Area, which covers the entire Pacific Coast.

I have received a telephonic report from the FBI's Special Agent in Charge at San Francisco, advising me that he contacted General DeWitt's office and that at the suggestion of General DeWitt discussed the matter with General James L. Bradley, who was handling this particular activity for General DeWitt.

The matter originated by a letter sent by General Jay L. Benedict, which letter was sent under the direction of General DeWitt to all of the Governors in the Ninth Army Corps Area. In substance it requested the Governors to have all their law enforcement agencies keep alien enemies under general surveillance in order to prevent possible sabotage and espionage. This letter was dated December 8, 1941.

Governor Arthur S. Langlie, of the State of Washington, replied by letter of December 12th to General DeWitt, setting out that the request of the General seemed to be in direct conflict with the instructions received by the Governor of Washington from Harold E. Stassen, the Chairman of the Council of State Governors. The instructions from Governor Stassen, dated December 9th, were to the effect that the Department of Justice was handling all alien matters.

General DeWitt, by letter of December 17, 1941, communicated with the Provost Marshal General at Washington, D. C., with which he inclosed the correspondence relative to this matter. General DeWitt requested in his letter to the Provost Marshal General that action be taken to clarify the situation to the Governors in the States comprising the Eastern Defense Command, which is the Ninth Army Corps Area. General DeWitt wanted the Governors of these States to feel free to issue such instructions and directions as they deemed necessary for the surveillance of alien

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enemies and sympathizers who had not been arrested by the FBI under the alien enemy arrests project.

General DeWitt replied to the Governor of Washington, stating in substance that he, General DeWitt, knew that it is the FBI's province to handle the alien enemy matters, but that he, the General, also in the common interest, in order to prevent sabotage and because of the potential dangers, wanted every step taken so that everything could be covered.

The Special Agent in Charge of the FBI at San Francisco had a lengthy discussion with General Bradley relative to just what General DeWitt desired, and briefly, the substance of General DeWitt's desires are as follows:

He wants the Attorney General to implement the President's Proclamation.

He wants the Attorney General to issue and execute regulations regarding the conduct of alien enemies immediately. The Army is disturbed about aliens having guns, radios, et cetera. General DeWitt stated that the Army knew that there were communications between shore and submarines off shore. The Army desires that radios be taken from all aliens.

General DeWitt indicated that the Army would like a simultaneous raid on all residences of all aliens so that they could seize such articles at one time. It was pointed out to him by the Special Agent in Charge of the FBI that such a move would be a tremendous project; that is to say, to raid the residences of every alien simultaneously in the entire Ninth Army Corps Area. General DeWitt stated that the Army believed that the issuance of orders to aliens to bring in such articles would not be effective in that those who are engaged in espionage activities wouldn't bring these articles in anyway, and that therefore there would have to be some kind of simultaneous search and seizure.

The sum and substance of what General DeWitt desires seems to be that he wants immediate action by the Attorney General under the President's Proclamation relative to the activities and conduct of alien enemies in the Ninth Army Corps Area. He is entirely agreeable to work with

the Federal Bureau of Investigation and was particularly pleased at the arrangement which I instructed the Agent in Charge at San Francisco to effect whereby General DeWitt and his aides and the Military Intelligence Division of the Ninth Army Corps Area would deal with but one representative of the FBI, namely, the Special Agent in Charge at San Francisco, who in turn would be in communication with the other Special Agents in Charge of the FBI in the Ninth Corps Area, namely, at San Diego, Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle, Salt Lake City, and Phoenix, as well as with the Washington Headquarters of the FBI.

It would seem that in view of the situation existing upon the West Coast, particularly with the operations of the enemy submarines within sight of the Coast and the information which the Army has that there have been radio communications between the Coast and enemy submarines at sea, prompt promulgation and enforcement of alien enemy regulations would be most desirable.

Respectfully

John Edgar Hoover
Director