

November 8, 1942

In reply refer to
SD 740.00115 European
War 1939/4570

Strictly Confidential

F. W. 740.00115 EW 39/4570

My dear Mr. Attorney General:

I acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Fahy's letter of September 18, 1942 making certain comments upon my letter to the President dated August 27, 1942 which, as I informed you on September 4, received the President's approval.

I shall be pleased as requested to give the Department of Justice an opportunity to examine any list of Germans proposed in accordance with our special agreement with the German Government for repatriation on the last sailing of the Gripsholm. As you may recall the German Government, quite independently of the general exchange agreement and in return for our undertaking to allow German nationals to the full capacity of the vessel to return to Europe when the Gripsholm accomplished its mission permitted the repatriation on the voyage of the Gripsholm from Goteborg to New York of all Americans in Sweden and Finland who were willing and ready to make the journey. Having discharged her part of the agreement, Germany may rightly look to us to discharge our obligation when the time comes.

I agree with you that it would be preferable to intern in this country or in the other American Republics under conditions satisfactory to us the remaining dangerous Axis nationals in this hemisphere. The obstacles preventing complete adoption of such a program appear, however, insurmountable. Although changing circumstances may remove a few of them, others may be

expected

The Honorable
Francis Biddle,
Attorney General.

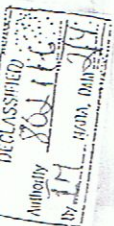
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expected to remain in our way indefinitely. For example, we are confronted with a shortage of shipping which can be used to bring persons here for internment or for examination prior to repatriation or to take materials necessary for the construction of internment camps to the countries where enemy nationals should be interned. In some countries, such as Ecuador and Bolivia, the continuing desire to retain neutrality, which can apparently be overcome only by overt actions of the Axis, prevents affirmative cooperation in our program unless it be presented as one of repatriation and even in this respect we will experience difficulties because we have not yet completely discharged our obligations to repatriate Axis nationals previously sent here. Elsewhere, as in Colombia, Venezuela and Mexico we are confronted by an intense national pride in sovereignty which will not permit compliance with suggestions that we be given Axis nationals to hold for them nor admit suggestions that existing internal measures are inadequate for security.

We must furthermore face the fact that all Axis nationals in the other American Republics, not excluding a proportion of the persons who arrived there in the guise of political or racial refugees, are potentially dangerous locally, if not in subversive activities at least as passive media for Axis propaganda, and that we not only lack the facilities to transfer all these persons here but cannot provide for the internment of all of them (as pointed out in Mr. Ennis' letter to Mr. Clattenburg dated September 21, 1942). In our hurried effort last winter to remove from Central America as many as possible dangerous subversive males we left behind for eventual repatriation their inherently non-dangerous wives and minor children. Our representatives in those countries now report that these women and children who were left behind constitute a most dangerous focus of anti-American propaganda and that they should be removed at the earliest possible opportunity.

We have studied all these problems in detail and are attempting to develop a program for removing Axis nationals from the other American Republics which will fit the circumstances peculiar to each country and at the same time achieve the following two objects:

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1. The transfer to this country of as many as possible of the Axis nationals whose internment in this country would be justified in terms of their inherently dangerous character or qualifications and of the burden and expense upon our Government.

2. The repatriation of as many as possible of the remainder on neutral vessels, arranged for by the protecting powers and not by this Government, which would stop at Trinidad or some other satisfactory control point.

I note that you agree to continuation of the exchange agreement with the Japanese Government until United States nationals and the nationals of the governments in this hemisphere associated with us in the war are out of the Far East so far as possible.

With respect to the removal of Japanese from the other American Republics for internment in the United States I should point out that the problem of the Japanese is in most countries relatively small. Exceptions are Peru, Brazil and Mexico.

We know that Mexico will send us no enemy nationals for internment and for that reason our efforts to obtain security through immobilization of the Japanese in Mexico must apparently be confined to efforts to repatriate some and to improve the surveillance over others, which is understood to be at present not reassuringly strict.

So far as concerns Brazil you are aware that the colony of Japanese in that country is extremely large. The attitude of the Brazilian Government toward transfer of aliens to us for internment is understood to coincide with that of the Mexican Government, hence the question is again one of repatriation or local internment.

For Peru the question is imperatively different. The Peruvian Government is attempting to maintain the neutrality. On the other hand it wishes to reduce to the smallest possible remainder its Japanese colony of some 30,000 persons who have primarily agricultural possessions. It has in fact requested our cooperation in removing these persons and I feel that we should do what we can in the matter to the extent that means can be found. The attitude of the Peruvian Government seems to be that it would send us the Japanese whom it wishes to expel them and that

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It would inform the Japanese Government that the United States Government has expressed its wish to eliminate so far as possible the Japanese colony of some 50,000 persons in that country which it feels to be a menace to its security. It has requested our cooperation in removing these persons as promptly as possible and I feel that we should do what we can although in view of the numbers involved we may find it preferable to accept for transfer to this country only the leaders of the Japanese colony and the elements which may appear to our representatives and to the Peruvian Government to be potential trouble makers. We might find it possible to devise means to cooperate with the Peruvian Government for the local restraint of the balance of the Japanese who are for the most part agricultural peasants. The American Embassy at Lima has reported that it is immaterial to the Peruvian Government that the Japanese Government might not wish to receive by way of repatriation any of the Japanese nationals sent here from Peru and that they might remain interned here for the duration of the present emergency, so long as the Peruvians could state that their motive was to facilitate the eventual repatriation of the Japanese.

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The Peruvian Government has expressed its wish to eliminate so far as possible the Japanese colony of some 50,000 persons in that country which it feels to be a menace to its security. It has requested our cooperation in removing these persons as promptly as possible and I feel that we should do what we can although in view of the numbers involved we may find it preferable to accept for transfer to this country only the leaders of the Japanese colony and the elements which may appear to our representatives and to the Peruvian Government to be potential trouble makers. We might find it possible to devise means to cooperate with the Peruvian Government for the local restraint of the balance of the Japanese who are for the most part agricultural peasants. The American Embassy at Lima has reported that it is immaterial to the Peruvian Government that the Japanese Government might not wish to receive by way of repatriation any of the Japanese nationals sent here from Peru and that they might remain interned here for the duration of the present emergency, so long as the Peruvians could state that their motive was to facilitate the eventual repatriation of the Japanese.

Sincerely yours,

Cordell Hull

A true copy of the signed original

Handwritten initials: JLB

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE
 OCT 30 1942
 NOV 5 1942

Handwritten initials: FE BA, JWB, RA

Handwritten initials: AL, FC, JWB

SD:AEC:RAM

10/21,23

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 Date: 11/01/2011