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CALIFORNIA LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS

On February 18, 1942, Attorney General Warren sent a letter to the district attorneys, sheriffs, and chiefs of police of California counties and cities in regard to the enemy alien situation. Warren asked these questions in the letter:

- 1) What in your opinion is the extent of the danger, by way of sabotage and fifth-column activities in your jurisdiction and in the State as a whole, arising from the presence of enemy aliens?
- 2) Do you believe that the danger can be adequately controlled by treating all enemy aliens alike, regardless of nationality, or do you believe that we should differentiate among them as to nationality?
- 3) What protective measures do you believe should be taken with reference to each nationality or with reference to enemy aliens as a whole in order to eliminate the danger of sabotage and fifth-column activities?
(Letter, Thomas Whelan, D.A. of San Diego County to Att. Gen. Warren, 2/19/42)

116 replies were available for study from ~~received from~~ California counties and cities.

(15 of these were printed in the Tolan Committee testimony, Part 29, pp. 10988-11000. Others were photostats from unpublished material in the Tolan Committee files.)

Quest #1
p. 4

An attempt was made to tabulate the answers to question #2 according to whether the official felt that:

- 1) the danger could be controlled by treating all enemy aliens alike;
- 2) The Germans and Italians were the most dangerous and should therefore receive different treatment;
- 3) the Japanese were the most dangerous and should therefore receive different treatment;
- 4) no opinion expressed.

It was discovered, however, that a large number of officials contradicted themselves in answering this question. This contradiction was so frequent that it was necessary to create a new category for it. The results of this tabulation follow.

- 1) The danger could be controlled by treating all enemy aliens alike.....28
- 2) The Germans and Italians were the most dangerous..... 4
- 3) The Japanese were the most dangerous.....54
- 4) No opinion.....12
- 5) Contradictory (say treat all alike in one part of letter; say Japanese more dangerous).....18

116

Most officials who believed that all enemy aliens should be treated alike, merely made that statement with no elaboration. A few examples follow of those who believed that the Germans and the Italians, or just the Germans, were more dangerous than the Japanese.

It is my belief that the Germans constitute the greatest threat in this area. A considerable number of Germans reside in this county and many more San Francisco Germans own summer homes and congregate on the slopes of Mount Tamalpais above Mill Valley. I believe most of these people have become naturalized American citizens. Despite that fact their allegiance to Nazi-Germany has remained prevalent and apparent.... (A. E. Bagshaw, D.A. of Marin Co. to Earl Warren, 2/19/42)

It appears that we have lost sight of the fact that Germans and Italians are enemies since the Pearl Harbor disaster, in fact the Japs have been more cooperative with us than (sic) either the Germans or Italians. It is more difficult to recognize a German or Italian than it is a Jap therefor they can move about easily without being noticed. (J.C. Gregory, Chief of Police, Fullerton, Calif., 2/19/42)

A few officials put the Germans and Japanese in the same dangerous group while thinking that the Italians constituted less of a danger. (District Attorneys of Colusa and Sonoma Counties) Several made flat statements of the innocence of the Italians.

We have numerous Italian aliens in San Joaquin County, but in my opinion, their danger as a saboteur and a fifth columnist is far below that of a Japanese or a German. (Martin Ansbro, Sheriff of San Joaquin Co. to Warren, 2/19/42)

We have quite a large Italian population in Marin County.... By far the greater number of these Italian nationals constitute no apparent danger. They are rooted in this country and regard it as theirs and have entirely lost allegiance to Italy. In fact, as a whole, it is my impression that the Italian aliens constitute the least problem of all enemy aliens. (A.E. Bagshaw, D.A. of Marin Co. to Warren, 2/19/42)

One of the most interesting things which developed from this tabulation of the relative dangerousness of the enemy aliens was the number of responsible public officials whose thinking, as exemplified by their contradictory statements, was confused. Following are some examples:

As to the Italian and German aliens, I feel that they present a lesser menace than the Japanese, due to the fact that we are fortunate in having a smaller number in our midst....

.....

In my opinion there is only one procedure to follow in handling this situation, which is the concentration of each and every one of the three classes of enemy aliens and I do not feel that any material difference exists in their potential danger to the internal security of this country. (C. B. Horrall, Chief of Police, Los Angeles, Calif. to Warren, 2/19/42)

I can see no reason why we should attempt to control this danger without treating all enemy aliens alike.... I believe that all enemy aliens, regardless of nationality, should be moved back not less than 200 miles from the Pacific coast, and in this group I include all Japanese, whether enemy aliens or citizens. In view of the fact that so many Japanese hold dual citizenship and knowing that they are not allowed to mix with the white race, it is natural to expect them to sympathize with Japan. (S. T. Primmer, Chief of Police, Santa Paula, Calif. to Warren, 2/19/42)

I believe it wise to treat all enemy aliens alike regardless of nationality. It would be my suggestion to remove all such aliens in particular the Japanese from the State of California... (W. H. Morrison, Chief of Police, Redlands, Calif. to Warren, 2/19/42)

I do not believe any distinction should be made between the different nationalities....

.....

We are satisfied that something must be done by some authority with the alien enemies, especially the Japanese. (Neal F. Anderson, Chief of Police of Pasadena, to Warren, 2/19/42)

In explaining their belief that the Japanese were more dangerous than other enemy aliens, law enforcement officials used most of the reasons which were used by the average citizen. More emphasis, however,

was placed on the danger of vigilante action by these officers than by the general public. The answers to Question #1 on the danger of sabotage in their district, showed that the vast majority of the officials felt that such action was probable and, under existing controls, difficult to handle. Pearl Harbor was frequently referred to. Some examples of the fear of vigilante action follow:

To avoid disaster, I believe that action must be taken to protect both the State and enemy aliens, as there are already 'rumblings' of vigilante activity which has been caused in the main, by the influx of Japanese from the evacuated areas. (N.L. Cornell, Sheriff of Merced County to Warren, 2/19/42)

The anti-Japanese sentiment of the community is at fever heat over their proximity, and what possible action they might pursue in the near future. We fear for their safety, should some unexpected action arise, and we believe much danger of sabotage would be eliminated, by their removal. (D. M. Blossom, Chief of Police of Huntington Beach, Calif. to Warren, 2/19/42)

We must also consider the fact that we have thousands of Filipino field laborers living in this state and the racial hatred is mounting higher and higher as we receive (sic) reports of conditions in the far east, We (sic) are in fact sitting on a leg (sic) of powder with conditions such as they are and we police in this section have already (sic) had trouble with orientals arming themselves and going out looking for an argument with Japanese. (Jas. M. Graves, Chief of Police of Watsonville, Calif. to Warren, 2/19/42)

Here in Oxnard we have a large element of both Japanese and Filipinos, and it has been brought to our attention that it has been planned by local Filipinos and some so-called "200% Americans" to declare a local 'war' against local Japanese, during the next blackout, resulting in our having to keep possible ring-leaders under surveillance, and increasing our auxiliary police by great numbers... (Geo. M. Pryor, Chief of Police of Oxnard, Calif. to Warren, 2/19/42)

A large number of the officials who said they believed the Japanese were the most dangerous of the enemy aliens used the racial argument to back up this contention.

My experience with the Japanese has been, that taken as a whole the great majority can't be trusted at any time and very much less at the present time. (E. C. Mehl, Chief of Police, Upland, Calif. to Warren, 2/19/42)

And dont (sic) let anyone kid you every one of Jap blood is purely Japanese and will never be anything else. (C. G. Echols, Chief of Police, Calexico to Warren, 2/19/42)

...after all they are American born but cann not be trusted, any further then (sic) you can see them. (J.H. Stroh, Chief of Police, Torrance, Calif. to Warren, 2/19/42)

Many also expressed the belief that the Japanese in California were loyal to the government of Japan.

Information sometimes leaks out from American-born Japanese school children as to how their alien parents feel toward this country. The parents, in many cases, have relations in Japan who have thru dire threats intimated some form of punishment which will be inflicted unless loyalty to Japan is practiced, not only in the home but in their dealings with all Americans in business dealings. (J. B. Ashurst, Chief of Police of Pomona, Calif., 2/21/42)

My opinion always has been that as to the Japanese there never was one, whether American born or not, that had absolutely divorced himself from the mother country.../ (Walter R. Evans, D. A. of Mono Co., Calif. to Warren, 2/18/42)

The Japanese, even American born, can never be assimilated into the white race due to their coloring. They will always be a people within a people. It is only natural to presume that they would have some natural leanings toward Japan. (Martin Ansbros, Sheriff of San Joaquin Co. to Warren, 2/19/42)

A few officials also used the argument that the Japanese were located in peculiarly strategic areas. For example,

The El Tejon Refinery south of Bakersfield adjoins a ranch occupied by Japanese aliens, which ranch is also located immediately beneath the Edison high tension power line. Other Japanese holdings are located along the route of this line. Japanese aliens hold quite a large area near the town of Rosamond and the Muroc Bombing Base. A tract in the fork between the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe Lines as they separate south of Mojave is held by a Japanese. A Japanese commercial establishment is located immediately across Highway 99 from an auxiliary landing field close to the Minter (Lerdo) Air Base. (Tom Scott, D.A. of Kern Co., to Warren, 2/19/42)

The danger in my jurisdiction is as follows, We have 1138 Japanese who are farming in this district, and each and every one live and farm around one of our essential plants that are either directly or indirectly connected with our Nat. Defense, Communication, K.N.X., Marine Radio Sta.,..... (John H. Stroh, Chief of Police, Torrance, Calif. to Warren, 2/19/42)

The public morale argument was also used:

We believe the evacuation of these people (the Japanese) would go a long way toward improving the morale of the people. The average citizen can not understand why we are at war, fighting the Japanese thousands of miles away, but still coddling the Japanese in our midst. The people are fearful that they will be 'murdered in their beds' by the Japanese in our midst. And to the average citizen, every Japanese he sees is an enemy. (Neal F. Anderson, Chief of Police of Pasadena, to Warren, 2/19/42)

The necessity for "getting tough" at the expense of civil rights and statutes was expressed by some of the officials.

Our State and Federal laws, supported by a bill of rights, are entirely inadequate to meet the situation. If we are not to run the risk of disaster we must forget such things as the writ of habeas corpus, and the prohibition against unreasonable searches and seizures. The right of self-defense, self-preservation, on behalf of the people, is higher than the bill of rights. (George Mordecai, D. A. of Madera Co., to Warren, 2/19/42)

A variation on this theme was supplied by the Chief of Police of Calexico:

The Mexicans have sent all of their Japs inland; and they wonder why we dont (sic) do the same. If we dont(sic) soon the Mexicans will say 'what the H ' and will lose all respect for us; and if we cant (sic) keep the wholehearted cooperation of the Countries to the South of us we are up against it for sure. (C. G. Echols, Chief of Police of Calexico to Warren, 2/19/42)

Answers to Question #3 were tabulated according to whether the official favored evacuation; opposed evacuation, or expressed no opinion on evacuation. An official who stated that he desired aliens, or Japanese aliens, or all Japanese to be removed from his locality was considered to approve evacuation. Following are the results of this tabulation:

Favoring evacuation.....	94
Opposing evacuation.....	4
No opinion.....	18

Some officials elaborated on their statements that evacuation was necessary. For example:

I feel that the Orange County problem would be solved if all enemy aliens were removed to the new prison just completed at Chino. The few prisoners there now could be removed to San Quentin and the open air prison at Chino could be turned into a concentration camp effectively and at small cost. (Jesse L. Elliott, Sheriff of Orange Co., to Warren, 2/20/42)

If it were possible, I believe the best way would be to take every Japanese alien in the United States and in the possessions of the United States and send them to Japan or find ways and means of getting them there. I believe that we should have as our ultimate objective, the complete alienation from the United States soil of every single Japanese alien. There should be some way to get them back to Japan.

.....
I believe to an extent that if the aliens cannot be shipped out of this country; they should be placed where they will not compete against the interests of the American people. The best place for them is in a concentration camp without any frills and just the bare necessities for their existence. (A. H. Brazil, D. A. of San Luis Obispo Co, to Warren, 2/20/42)

The few officials who opposed evacuation did so on the grounds that it would disrupt the economy of the state unnecessarily.

The farming activities in San Joaquin County would be seriously crippled, if the Japanese were moved out of California at the present time.... The asparagus crop in this County is just starting to bear and the industry will be in full swing, shortly. Large numbers of Japanese farm laborers are used in the cutting, cultivating and packing of asparagus. The celery crop in San Joaquin County is a very large industry and a great percentage of the work is done by Japanese farm laborers. Potatoes and numerous other vegetables are raised in San Joaquin County and a wholesale removal of the Japanese would seriously impair the raising of vegetables.... The Delta or island region with perhaps seventy five thousand acres under cultivation should be much more strictly supervised. The Japanese on these islands should be restricted to that island and not allowed to leave.... If the Japanese have to be moved from other areas, it may be possible to absorb some of the removals on these islands. (Martin Ansbro, Sheriff of San Joaquin Co., 2/19/42)

As I believe that we do need the income from the farms that might be idle by moving them out of this country, that each county establish a camp or camps near by and check them out and back again each day and let them go to and from there (sic) farms and continue raising crops.../ (John H. Stroh, Chief of Police of Torrance, to Warren, 2/19/42)

From what I have been able to observe and read concerning the evacuation of persons, I would seriously recommend that in place of evacuating these areas, that Military Guards be established around them for the following reasons:

That in these three areas we have fruit trees, vineyards and vegetable gardens that have been operated by Japanese for a long period of time and in many cases the adult children, citizens of this country, are the actual operators...

If these areas are designated as a sort of concentration camp, or at least a guarded area, proper supervision could be exercised and more Japanese allowed to go into the area and employed by the present operators, so that the plan would be self-supporting, save and except for the expense of the guard.

(Allen A. Henderson, D. A. Merced Co., to Warren, 2/19/42)

The sheriff of Santa Clara County expressed the hope that if evacuation were necessary, it would be done humanely. He also stated:

I think above all things that the American reputation for fairness should be maintained. I do not mean that they should be afforded the opportunity to in any way endanger us, but those aliens who have committed no overt, or subversive act, should be regarded simply as potentially dangerous; and so controlled to prevent this danger from becoming actual.

It must always be borne in mind that uncounted numbers of young Americans whose patriotism of a high degree have come from the homes of aliens of enemy nationalities; and from all of the nations with which we are at war.

(Wm. J. Enig, Sheriff of Santa Clara Co. to Warren, 2/19/42)

Farm
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|||||
94 116

oppose
Contra Coar

||||

4

no opinion
Can't tell

|||||

18

73

→
ds more dang.

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|||||
54

116

4

g. + s ... "

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no diff. no danger

|||||

28

Contradict Statement
(say treat alike
but emphasis
on ds)

|||||

18

no opinion
Can't tell

||||

12

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12

Calif. Sheriffs & Chiefs of Police

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Part I

Coronado

● Long Beach

S. Barbara Co.

Santa Maria

San Bruno

~~Tulare Co. - 4a~~

S. Joaquin Co. - Vs evac. because of 10

S. Cruz Co.

~~Kern Co. - see for 7th~~

L. A. Co.

Sonoma - (D. A.) Lumps, 9 + 13

Albany

Stanislaus Co. (contrad)

● Yuba Co (D. A.)

S. Bernardino City

Kings Co.

S. Clara Co (sheriff) - fair, 4 b

Marin Co. - 9s more dangerous (D. A.)

Watsonville (lumps 9 + 15 - see for ^{reason for evac.} literary - 4a

Yolo Co. D - A.

Hayward

Riverside Co.

~~Ogden - 4a~~

Part II

Arcadia

Hawthorne

Torrance - 7 b, 8 - Vs evac - see alternative

● S. Jose

Pasadena (contrad)

S. Fran - C. + C. (sheriff)

loyalty to Japan
~~California~~
Pomona

Pittsburg

Fullerton - g + d more danc

Mendocino Co. - Sheriff

Hallister Contrad

Marine Co. - Sheriff - see for g statement

Montebello -

~~Mendocino Co. Sheriff~~

Napa City

Mono Co. ?

~~Lake~~ Modoc Co. - Sheriff

Mendocino Co. - D. A.

Lassen Co.

Lake Co.

Newport Beach

Merced Co. - D. A. - Vs evan.

Yolo Co. - Sheriff

Compton

Colusa Co. - D. A. - g + d lumped

Ventura Co. - D. A.

Modoc Co. - D. A.

Anaheim

San Marino

~~Stuhamme~~ Some Co. - ~~Trayson~~ Sheriff

El Monte

Placer Co. - Sheriff

Sutter Co. - " Contrad

7 Co. - Kavengh - D. A.

Sutter Co. - D. A.

Orange City

Placer Co. - D. A. Contrad

Mono Co. - D. A. - 8

San Fernando (g + d danc)

Replies from Calif. Sheriffs + Chiefs of Police

Los Angeles City (Chief of Police)

Part III

See for contradiction

✓ San Diego County (Dist. att) Rec
(quotes N's ?s)

~~San Luis Obispo - quote - from D. A.~~

San Francisco C. + C. (D. A.)

Fresno City

Sacramento - quote City (G + I + I don't work together)

Santa Paula (quote for G + I more dang.)
+ contradiction.

Mariposa (good for contrad.)

S. Clara Co. - vs. evan.; contrad. - D. A.

Madera City

Imperial Co.

Madera Co. - reason for exp. - 12

Merced Co. - see for "a Sheriff

Culver City - G + I more dangerous - see for "

S. San Fran. -

Part III - see for

Yreka

Redlands - contrad.

Monrovia - for illiteracy 8 + next to last TP

Bakersfield

Crescent City

Huntington Beach - 4a

Yuba Co. - see for ex. of not saying anything

Chico

Tulare

Coalinga

Cop of ds more dangerous don't treat all alike
Mariposa
D. A. Co.

(over)

KM

Huntington Park

Stockton

Independence

Glendale - last TP for 4 h

S. Gate

Delano - strong statement of 1 danger

*Tulare Co. - not in tabul. (re ds coming into Co.)

Corona

Chula Vista

El Dorado Co.

Richmond - see for ambiguity

S. L. Obispo Co. - from Sheriff

Alpine Co. -

Fresno Co. see for variation of contrad. & possibility of trouble with ds

Orange Co. - ~~wants them imprisoned at Chino; (4a)~~ Rev

Humboldt Co. -

Calexico - (for reason - 13) & 8

Eureka

Pomona - very anti d - 8 & 2

Piedmont - contrad.

Rialto

San Anselmo

Martinez

Sonoma Co. contrad (Sheriff)

Orange Co

Alameda City

Plumas Co.

Santa Ana contrad

San Andreas

Jackson

Cos

S. Diego
S. Luis Obispo
San Francisco
S. Clara
Imperial
Madera
Merced
Yuba
El Dorado
Alpine
Fresno
Orange
Humboldt
Sonoma
Plumas
Mendocino
Lassen
Lake
Yolo
Colusa
Ventura
Modoc
Tulolumne
Placer
Sutter
?
Mono
S. Barbara
Tulare
S. Joaquin

S. Cruz
Kern
L. A.
Stanislaus
Yuba
Marin
Riverside