

October 17, 1941

EXHIBIT

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. TOLSON  
MR. TAMM  
MR. LADD

T

While talking with SAC Pieper at San Francisco on another matter he told me that he had just dictated to Mr. Spear a short while ago some information which might be of interest to me. Mr. Pieper advised me that an area about one hundred miles wide in from the Coast line has been designated as a combat zone, and, the Army has indicated to him they have the authority to throw out anybody in this zone that they don't like. They also indicated to Mr. Pieper that they would probably call on us for the names of those that were considered undesirable or dangerous.

Mr. Pieper advised me that this combat zone extends from the Canadian border down to the Mexican border and is approximately one hundred miles, but goes in as far as Phoenix, Arizona, and well inland along the Canadian border along a transcontinental railroad. SAC Pieper stated that they were also considering including in this zone the Donner Pass area and the railroad going through the mountains there.

SAC Pieper stated that it was indicated to him that an actual invasion of the West Coast was expected for the effect it would have upon our morale, and that the Army wanted to remove all people out of this 'invasion' area who were considered undesirable. He stated that the thought occurred to him that if we did give them a list now, we wouldn't be giving them anything they don't already have, as we have given them two or three lists already; also that if anybody is to be picked up or any organization is going to go after these people, we certainly should try to get the credit for what we have already done. I told SAC Pieper that I did not think they were going to get by with that plan, and I thought the Army was getting a bit hysterical, and although I believe the condition is very critical and serious, I do not believe that they can put over any plan to clean people out of that area unless there is some very imminent prospect of attack. He said that he wanted me to know about this as he did not want someone to go out and get these people and then come back talking about what a big job they had done when we had really done all of the work. I told Pieper to keep me advised of the progress of this plan, that although the situation was critical, there was no sense in the Army losing their heads as they did in the Booneville Dam affair, where the power lines were sabotaged by cattle scratching their backs on the wires, or the 'arrows of fire' near Seattle, which was only a farmer burning brush as he had done for years.

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DATE 9-17-81 BY 6383 KET/AG

SAC Pieper said that in an official communique it was stated that planes were overhead on two occasions and that they had evidence that flares were dropped. I told him that I had no doubt that the planes were there but there was some question in my mind as to whether flares were dropped; that I thought all the Japs were trying to do was to have a few planes flying around our coast, not dropping any bombs, but just trying to scare us and keep our forces scattered. I told Pieper that of course the Army would be responsible for the Coast in the event of an invasion, and to keep me advised of any rumors along that line.

I asked Mr. Pieper if they proposed to move both citizens and aliens out of this zone. He said that they proposed to move anyone considered dangerous and undesirable. I told Pieper that we wanted to be careful that we don't get caught holding the bag if these people start hollering and the Army comes back by saying that they moved the people because the FBI said they were bad.

In this regard I told SAC Pieper about the teletype we are sending to all offices tonight to send in Air Mail Special Delivery a list of the names of American citizens, either by naturalization or birth, who each SAC considers should be taken into custody during the present emergency together with supporting evidence to make the cases. I pointed out to him that each SAC must prove the cases against such people, and also that we are not at war with Russia, therefore a lot of 'Comies' who we do not think are so not are nevertheless in good grace at the present.

(At this time I interrupted this call to speak with SAC Shivers)

10:58 PM

At this time I completed my call to Mr. Pieper. I told him that we wanted to send this list to the Department stating that these people are in our estimation, a danger to the security of the Nation. I told him that there is no law at the present permitting us to pick up citizens but that such a law is under consideration and we should be prepared.

I told Mr. Pieper that we must have proof not just allegations against these people; that we are up against the Civil Liberties crowd who are more interested in civil liberties than internal security; but on the other hand, I don't want any sabotage, espionage or 5th column activities break loose and have the public ask why the FBI did not have the perpetrators taken into custody before they had a chance to perform their acts only to have the Department ask why we didn't give the names to them for consideration. I told him that such a list would be the type would authorize him to turn over to the Army if they declared a barred zone but I didn't think they would be able to do it unless we were actually threatened with invasion, and I doubt that in view of the fact that the ships were permitted to sail.

Mr. Pieper stated that he personally thinks that there is a fight in progress between the Army and Navy. I stated that I believe that is the trouble that they are fighting among themselves instead of together, and for that reason we want to keep our feet on the ground but at the same time we don't want to miss any bad ones that should be taken care of; that we don't want to do anything such as Morgenthau wanted done last Monday. I told Mr. Pieper that it was that kind of a trend; and that if the Army wanted to take in thousands predicated upon lists furnished by us we wanted to be very careful to have specific recommendations on every person on any of our lists so that if there is any howl afterwards, we will not be left holding the bag.

I told Mr. Pieper that his office was in one of the tightest spots in the service right now. He said they were moving along very smoothly, that their only concern was that they couldn't do as much as they wanted, and they couldn't do that without more men, so they would continue to do their best. I told him that I had Mr. Gurnea going up and down the West Coast to see what we can do to implement our offices out there.

Mr. Pieper stated that he had just been out to see the Japanese Consul General and had lined him up and will place guards very shortly; that he will have them all lined up soon in one place. I told him that I had been fighting for ten days to get them all locked up in one place and had finally won out. I told him that the Germans and Japanese are now bottled up in their embassies and can't get out and that I wanted the consulates throughout the country handled in the same manner but of course we must treat them courteously as our people over there will be treated in a manner similar to ours. I told Mr. Pieper that after the acts of the Consul General at Honolulu I did not trust any of them and for that reason wanted them all confined.

Very truly yours,

John Edgar Hoover  
Director