

JAPANESE/AMERICAN RELOCATION COMMISSION HEARING

JUNE 21, 1984

REMARKS BY JOHN J. McCLOY

THE TIME IS NOW LONG OVERDUE WHEN THE COUNTRY SHOULD BE AFFORDED WHAT IT HAS NOT HAD UP-TO-DATE, NAMELY AN HONEST, FAIR AND OBJECTIVE ACCOUNT OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH PRESIDENT FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT ORDERED THE STEPS TAKEN BY HIM TO HELP SECURE THE SAFETY AND DEFENSE OF THE COUNTRY FOLLOWING THE MASSIVE AND DISASTROUS SURPRISE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR BY THE ARMED FORCES OF JAPAN ON DECEMBER 7, 1941.

WE HAVE NOW HEARD FROM THE "REVISIONISTS" AND THOSE WHO WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE THAT IT WAS RACIAL PREJUDICE WHICH INDUCED THE PRESIDENT'S ACTION TO INSTITUTE THE RELOCATION PROCESS IN REGARD TO CERTAIN SEGMENTS OF OUR JAPANESE DESCENDED RESIDENTS IN THE MILITARILY SENSITIVE AREAS ALONG OUR WEST COAST AND THUS TO COUNTER THE DEEP CONSEQUENCES OF THE PEARL HARBOR DISASTER TO OUR OVERALL DEFENSE SYSTEM.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT OUR GOVERNMENT SHOULD DEFEND ITSELF AGAINST THIS GROTESQUE CHARGE THAT IT WAS RACE PREJUDICE AND NOT REALISTIC SECURITY PRECAUTIONS WHICH INDUCED PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S ORDER. THE PRESIDENT WAS THE MAN WHO MADE THE DECISION AND HE WAS, I BELIEVE, THE ONLY MAN IN THE UNITED STATES WHO COULD MAKE IT. MR. ROOSEVELT WAS NOT ONLY THE PRESIDENT BUT THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF OUR ARMED FORCES, SO

SPECIFIED BY THE CONSTITUTION. HE WAS IMPELLED BY NO CONSIDERATIONS OTHER THAN THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF THE COUNTRY. IT IS ALSO INDISPUTABLE THAT THE DIRECT AND PROXIMATE CAUSE OF THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION WAS THE ATTACK ITSELF AND NOTHING ELSE. HIS DECISION WAS SUPPORTED AND ENDORSED, TO BE SURE, BY HIS SECURITY ADVISORS, SUCH AS SECRETARY OF WAR COLONEL HENRY L. STIMSON; SECRETARY OF NAVY COLONEL FRANK KNOX; CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMY GENERAL GEORGE C. MARSHALL; UNDERSECRETARY OF WAR AND FORMER CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS JUDGE ROBERT PATTERSON (WHO WAS DESIGNATED BY LAW TO BE IN CHARGE OF OUR MUNITIONS AND WAR MATERIAL PRODUCTION PROGRAMS). THERE WERE MANY OTHERS WHO MIGHT BE MENTIONED WHO HAD RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SECURITY OF THE COUNTRY AND WHO FELT THE ACTION WAS NECESSARY. IT WAS MEN AND STATESMEN SUCH AS THESE WHO WOULD HAVE TO BE CHARGED, IN THE LAST ANALYSIS, WITH RACE PREJUDICE RATHER THAN A CONCERN FOR THE SECURITY OF THE COUNTRY. IT IS UTTERLY INCONGRUOUS TO SUGGEST THAT THEY WERE.

IT WAS A FACT THAT THE ATTACK WAS SUPPLEMENTED (UNKNOWN TO BUT A FEW AT THAT TIME) BY INFORMATION GIVING THE FOREGOING OFFICIALS (AS WELL AS A FEW OTHERS) CLEAR KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXISTENCE OF SUBVERSIVE JAPANESE AGENCIES DESIGNED TO OPERATE IN THIS COUNTRY TO MEET FURTHER ATTACKS OR SUBVERSIONS SHOULD ANY SIMILAR ATTACK OCCUR. THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH AGENCIES WAS NOT ONLY ADMITTED BY THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT BUT THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT ACTUALLY BOASTED OF IT IN THEIR COMMUNICATIONS SENT FROM TOKYO TO SOME OF THEIR MOST IMPORTANT OVERSEAS EMBASSIES, AGENCIES AND COMMANDS. THE INFORMATION,

OBVIOUSLY THEN A CLOSELY GUARDED SECRET, WAS AVAILABLE THROUGH "MAGIC", A SYSTEM BY WHICH WE WERE ABLE TO READ INTERCEPTED JAPANESE CODED MESSAGES BEFORE AND DURING A LARGE PART OF THE WAR. THE FAR REACHING CONSEQUENCES OF THE JAPANESE ATTACK, TOGETHER WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OBTAINED BY "MAGIC", MORE THAN SUPPLIED ALL THE INFORMATION NEEDED TO JUSTIFY FULLY PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S ACTION. THE PRESIDENT AND THOSE ADVISORS OF HIS WHO WERE NAMED ABOVE WERE ALL MEN OF EXTENDED EXPERIENCE IN THE MILITARY AND DEFENSE PROBLEMS OF THE COUNTRY AND THEY WERE QUITE ABLE TO RECOGNIZE AND COMPREHEND THE FULL CONSEQUENCES OF THE DISASTROUS PEARL HARBOR ATTACK.

PROOF THAT THE COMMISSION DID NOT CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION WORTHY OF THE NAME IS DEMONSTRATED BY THE FACT THAT IT NEVER IDENTIFIED THE EXISTENCE OF "MAGIC" AS EVIDENCE OF JAPANESE INTENT TO SUBVERT THE SECURITY OF THE COUNTRY THROUGH DISLOYAL RESIDENTS HERE IN THE EVENT OF AN ATTACK BY JAPAN. THIS, OF COURSE, SHOULD HAVE BEEN PRESENTED AT THE OUTSET OF ANY OBJECTIVE INVESTIGATION AND THOUGH THE EXISTENCE OF "MAGIC" WAS A CLOSELY GUARDED SECRET AT THE TIME OF THE ATTACK, BY THE TIME THE COMMISSION'S INVESTIGATION THE EXISTENCE OF "MAGIC" WAS ALMOST NOTORIOUSLY KNOWN BY ALL KNOWLEDGEABLE MILITARY AND INTELLIGENCE SOURCES IN THIS COUNTRY AND IN JAPAN, AS WELL.

ONE MUST HAVE EXPERIENCED THE MANNER IN WHICH THE INVESTIGATION OF THE COMMISSION WAS PLANNED AND CONDUCTED TO GAIN ANY SENSE OF THE BASIC UNRELIABILITY OF ITS PROCEDURE. ANY ATTEMPT TO JUSTIFY THE PRESIDENT'S ACTION

WAS GREETED WITH BOOS AND HISSES IN A MANNER DIS-GRACEFUL TO ANY FAIR INVESTIGATION OR TO OUR OWN LEGISLATIVE HEARING TRADITIONS. MOREOVER, THE SEQUENCE IN WHICH THE TESTIMONY WAS TAKEN IS A CLEAR INDICATION OF ITS UNFAIRNESS, AS THERE WAS NO TESTIMONY FAVORABLE TO THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TAKEN UNTIL JUST BEFORE THE HEARINGS WERE TO BE CLOSED. THERE WAS, OF COURSE, NO LACK OF RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION ON THE PART OF THE PRESIDENT, SECRETARY HULL AND THOSE WHO WERE IN SUPPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S ACTION TAKEN AFTER THE ATTACK. BUT, SUCH INDIGNATION WAS BASED WHOLLY UPON THE ATTACK ITSELF. THERE ARE MANY OTHER FLAWS THAT CAN BE BROUGHT AGAINST THE TESTIMONY WHICH WAS PLANNED AND PRESENTED BY THE COMMISSION.

IT IS, OF COURSE, TRUE THAT MANY OF OUR JAPANESE DESCENDED POPULATION WERE LOYAL. BUT, IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT THERE WERE A GOOD MANY OTHERS OF OUR JAPANESE DESCENDED POPULATION WHOSE LOYALTY WAS UNCERTAIN SHOULD A FURTHER ATTACK OCCUR. IT WAS ONE OF MY OBJECTIVES WHILE I WAS IN THE WAR DEPT. DURING THE JAPANESE WAR TO USE SUCH INFLUENCE AS I HAD TO INDUCE THOSE IN AUTHORITY IN THE ARMY TO PERMIT OUR JAPANESE DESCENDED RESIDENTS TO DISPLAY THEIR LOYALTY TO THE COUNTRY IN THE WAR INTO WHICH WE HAD BEEN SO SUDDENLY PLUNGED BY THE ATTACK. AFTER SOME EFFORT, I WAS SUCCESSFUL IN PERSUADING OUR MILITARY PEOPLE TO ACCEPT THE SERVICES OF JAPANESE DESCENDED MEMBERS OF OUR POPULATION WHO SOUGHT TO GIVE EVIDENCE OF THEIR LOYALTY TO THE COUNTRY BY FIGHTING IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY. THIS WAS MADE POSSIBLE IN THE EUROPEAN SECTOR OF

THE WAR INTO WHICH WE HAD BECOME ENGAGED AS A RESULT OF THE ATTACK. ACCORDINGLY, THE 442ND COMBAT TEAM WAS FORMED AND SO USED. IT SUFFERED BITTER CASUALTIES AT THE SAME TIME THAT IT BECAME ONE OF THE MOST HEAVILY DECORATED UNITS OF ITS SIZE IN THE ENTIRE ARMY.

I WOULD BE HAPPY TO SEE A MONUMENT ERECTED TO THE MEMORY OF THOSE WHO SERVED IN THAT UNIT AND SO PATRIOTICALLY GAVE EVIDENCE OF THEIR LOYALTY TO THE COUNTRY. AND, I WOULD HAVE THE MONUMENT NOT ONLY HONOR THE MEMORY OF THE 442ND COMBAT TEAM BUT THAT OF ALL THOSE JAPANESE/AMERICANS WHOSE LOYALTY REMAINED WITH THE UNITED STATES DURING THE TRYING PERIOD WHEN WE WERE AT WAR WITH JAPAN.

OUR RELATIONS WITH THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT HAVE PROBABLY NEVER BEEN BETTER THAN THEY ARE TODAY. IT IS ONE OF THE MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS OF BOTH COUNTRIES THAT THEY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CREATE SUCH GOOD RELATIONS IN SPITE OF THE ILL-ADVISED SNEAK ATTACK. WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ENTER INTO A PARTNERSHIP WITH JAPAN TO MAINTAIN THE PEACE AND ADVANCE OUR GOOD RELATIONS. OUR COMBINED EFFORTS SHOULD NOW CENTER ON STEPS TO DETER ANY THOUGHT OF FUTURE SURPRISE ATTACKS OR HAVING EVER TO THINK IN TERMS OF RELOCATION PROGRAMS. IT WOULD CONSTITUTE A HEAVY SET BACK TO OUR GOOD RELATIONS AND INTENTIONS IF IT WERE TO BE DECLARED THAT OUR GOVERNMENT OR THE HIGH CLASS STATESMEN WHO THEN DIRECTED OUR DEFENSE PROGRAMS HAD BEEN MOTIVATED BY RACE PREJUDICE RATHER THAN BY CONSIDERATION FOR OUR NATION'S SAFETY.

THESE WERE STATESMEN OF GREAT STATURE, SOME OF THE FINEST MEN WHO HAVE EVER SERVED THE COUNTRY. THEY

KNEW AND COULD JUDGE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE LOSS OF OUR PACIFIC FLEET, THE PREPONDERANT POSITION OF THE JAPANESE SURFACE NAVY AND THE VITAL NECESSITY OF MAINTAINING THE CONTINUOUS SUPPLY OF OUR ARMED FORCES.

IT IS A FACT, I BELIEVE, THAT THE RECORDS SHOW I WAS IN FAVOR OF STOPPING THE RELOCATION PROGRAM AFTER THE MIRACLE VICTORY OF MIDWAY OCCURRED. NEITHER THE PRESIDENT NOR ANY OTHER MILITARY ADVISOR HAD THE BENEFIT OF HINDSIGHT IN RELATION TO THIS VICTORY OF MIDWAY WHEN THE ORIGINAL ORDER WAS ISSUED. IT WAS REALLY A VERY NARROW SQUEAK. I CAME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT IF WE COULD DEFEAT THE JAPANESE AT MIDWAY AFTER FACING AN ADVERSE 5-TO-1 RATIO IN OUR SURFACE FLEET THAT THERE WAS LITTLE NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THE ULTIMATE OUTCOME OF THE WAR. IN THE MEANTIME, WE HAD GAINED NEARLY A YEAR'S UNIMPAIRED PRODUCTION.

I HAD NOT, HOWEVER, INITIATED THE PROGRAM ANY MORE THAN I COULD CANCEL IT. OTHERS, HOWEVER, IN THE CHAIN OF COMMAND, FELT EVEN AFTER MIDWAY THAT OUR ULTIMATE SUCCESS WAS NOT ASSURED AND TO ABANDON THE PROGRAM WOULD BE PREMATURE. THIS ATTITUDE ALSO HAD NOTHING WHATEVER TO DO WITH RACE PREJUDICE. WHATEVER ATTITUDE I MAY HAVE TAKEN AND WHATEVER OPINION I MAY HAVE HELD AFTER OUR MIDWAY VICTORY, IT IS INCONGRUOUS TO SUGGEST THAT MY SENIORS, IN RESPECT OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SECURITY OF THE COUNTRY, WERE MOTIVATED BY RACE PREJUDICE OR THAT THE COUNTRY HAS ANYTHING WHATEVER TO APOLOGIZE FOR IN THE ACTION WHICH WAS TAKEN BY PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT AFTER THE JAPANESE DESTRUCTION OF OUR PACIFIC FLEET BY THE SURPRISE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR.

THERE IS ANOTHER MAJOR CONSIDERATION WHICH HAS TO BE KEPT IN MIND. IT IS NEVER POSSIBLE ADEQUATELY TO EQUATE THE SACRIFICES OR, INDEED, THE SUFFERINGS WHICH WAR COMPELS. THIS IS TRUE IN MANY CASES OF EVERY WAR. BUT IT IS, OF COURSE, MORE STRIKINGLY SO 40 YRS. AFTER THE WAR TOOK PLACE.

I DO NOT SUGGEST THAT OUR JAPANESE DESCENDED POPULATION WAS NOT SERIOUSLY INCONVENIENCED BY THE PROGRAM OR, INDEED, THAT ITS WELFARE WAS NOT AFFECTED. BUT, THERE WERE MANY AMERICAN CITIZENS WHO WERE NEVER ADEQUATELY COMPENSATED FOR THE SUFFERINGS OR TRAGEDIES THEY WERE COMPELLED TO FACE DUE TO THE WAR.

GENERALLY SPEAKING, THOSE WHOM THE GOVERNMENT SOUGHT TO RELOCATE FOR MILITARY REASONS WERE IN SOME RESPECTS ADVANTAGED BY THE MOVE, WHILE OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE POPULATION, ONLY RELATIVELY FEW, WERE EVER CALLED ON FOR MILITARY SERVICE. PROVISIONS FOR DAMAGE CLAIMS WERE MADE WHEN WITNESSES AND RECORDS WERE FRESH AND AVAILABLE. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS FROM THE FEDERAL RESERVE WERE DESIGNATED TO HELP PROTECT THEIR FINANCIAL INTERESTS. MAINTENANCE WAS TAKEN CARE OF BY THE GOVERNMENT, THEIR HEALTH WAS GUARDED AND PROVISION WAS MADE FOR THE EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN.

FROM THE OUTSET, I SOUGHT TO RELIEVE THE ARMY OF THE DUTY OF PARTICIPATING IN THE RELOCATION PROGRAM. THE ARMY HAD MANY RESPONSIBILITIES ON ITS HANDS DUE TO THE TWO-FRONT WAR IT CONFRONTED AS A RESULT OF THE JAPANESE ATTACK. BUT, THE DECISION WAS MADE BECAUSE THE PRESIDENT, WHO MADE IT, BELIEVED THAT THE ARMY WAS THE BEST AGENCY TO CONDUCT THE INITIAL PROGRAM PARTICULARLY CONSIDERING THE TIME ELEMENT WHICH THE ATTACK HAD INTRODUCED.