

October 5, 1969

President
Freedom House
20 West 40th Street
New York, N.Y. 10018

Dear Sir:

We as Asian Americans would like to express to your organization our reactions and concerns regarding the designation of retired Chief Justice Earl Warren as the recipient of your Freedom Award during ceremonies on October 14th.

As Attorney General of California at the time, Mr. Warren was one of the most articulate and chief architects of the policy resulting in the wholesale evacuation and removal to detention camps, without trial, of 110,000 Japanese residents (including 70,000 U.S. citizens) from the West Coast during World War II. To date he has never retracted a single word of the many vicious anti-Japanese and racist remarks he made during the time, nor has he made a public statement in support of the now almost unanimous determination that this act was among the the most disgraceful in the history of this country.

Although these events transpired over 25 years ago, we find it particularly pertinent today in view of the concentration camps already in existence (in Pennsylvania, Florida, Oklahoma, Arizona and California), authorized by Title II of the McCarran Internal Security Act of 1950, and of the real danger of their use being implemented under the Eastland Security Act of 1969, introduced by Senator Eastland on Feb. 12, 1968 and now under active consideration in the Senate. Further, Mr. J. Edgar Hoover's recent statement in which he implied by innuendo that the Chinese residents and immigrants to this country may be suspect as agents of the People's Republic of China only adds fuel to the kind of hysteria that led to the mass removal of people of Japanese ancestry during the last World War.

As a matter of fact, we question Freedom House itself -- we wonder, as a self-described national educational organization dedicated to strengthening free institutions through research and policy recommendations on public issues, whether your organization has studied and public recommended the dissolution of these camps and against passage of this anti-democratic bill? We trust you agree that a country that must resort to concentration camps and police-state bills cannot be a free country. It would be appropriate, then, it would seem to us, that during the occasion of a Freedom Award presentation, this concern is expressed and shared with the audience.

We commend Mr. Warren's role during the Supreme Court school desegregation case -- but we regret and deplore his silence regarding the shameful persecution, mass evacuation and incarceration of Japanese people during World War II. It is our hope that he will rectify this blot on his past record by speaking up in behalf of the dissolution of any concentration camps now in existence or in the process of construction, and for the defeat of any bills which threaten to create a police state.

If Freedom House is truly dedicated to strengthening freedom, we urge that it do likewise -- declare its opposition to the ominous trend in this country exemplified by the McCarran Internal Security Act of 1950 and the Eastland Security Act of 1969,

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Page 2 - to Freedom House

as well as voice your concern about Mr. Hoover's inflammatory statement. In these critical times, dare Freedom House do less?

Sincerely,

ASIAN AMERICANS FOR ACTION

L. Iijima, Secretary

cc-NAACP
cc-S.F. Nisei Voters League