Executive Order

Authorizing the Secretary of War to Prescribe Military Areas

Whereas the successful prosecution of the war requires every possible protection against espionage and against sabotage to national-defense material, national-defense premises, and national-defense utilities as defined in Section 4, Act of April 20, 1918, 40 Stat. 533, as amended by the Act of November 30, 1940, 54 Stat. 1220, and the Act of August 21, 1941, 55 Stat. 655 (U.S.C., Title 50, Sec. 104);

Now, therefore, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States, and Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, I hereby authorize and direct the Secretary of War, and the Military Commanders whom he may from time to time designate, whenever he or any designated Commander deems such action necessary or desirable, to prescribe military areas in such places and of such extent as he or the appropriate Military Commander may determine, from which any or all persons may be excluded, and with respect to which, the right of any person to enter, remain in, or leave shall be subject to whatever restrictions the Secretary of War or the appropriate Military Commander may impose in his discretion. The Secretary of War is hereby authorized to provide for residents of any such area who are excluded therefrom, such transportation, food, shelter, and other accommodations as may be necessary, in the judgment of the Secretary of War or the said Military Commander, and until other arrangements are made, to accomplish the purpose of this order. The designation of military areas in any region or locality shall supersede designations of prohibited and restricted areas by the Attorney General under the Proclamations of December 7 and 8, 1941, and shall supersede the responsibility and authority of the Attorney General under the said Proclamations in respect of such prohibited and restricted areas.

I hereby further authorize and direct the Secretary of War and the said Military Commanders to take such other steps as he or the appropriate Military Commander may deem advisable to enforce compliance with the restrictions applicable to each Military area hereinabove authorized to be designated, including the use of Federal troops and other Federal Agencies, with authority to accept assistance of state and local agencies.

I hereby further authorize and direct all Executive Departments, independent establishments and other Federal Agencies, to assist the Secretary of War or the said Military Commanders in carrying out this Executive Order, including the furnishing of medical aid, hospitalization, food, clothing, transportation, use of land, shelter, and other supplies, equipment, utilities, facilities, and services.

This order shall not be construed as modifying or limiting in any way the authority heretofore granted under Executive Order No. 8972, dated December 12, 1941, nor shall it be construed as limiting or modifying the duty and responsibility of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, with respect to the investigation of alleged acts of sabotage or the duty and responsibility of the Attorney General and the Department of Justice under the Proclamations of December 7 and 8, 1941, prescribing regulations for the conduct and control of alien enemies, except as such duty and responsibility is superseded by the designation of military areas hereunder.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

The White House,

February 19, 1942.

**Milton Eisenhower**: When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, our West Coast became a potential combat zone. Living in that zone were more than 100,000 persons of Japanese ancestry: two thirds of them American citizens; one third aliens. We knew that some among them were potentially dangerous. But no one knew what would happen among this concentrated population if Japanese forces should try to invade our shores. Military authorities therefore determined that all of them, citizens and aliens alike, would have to move. This picture tells how the mass migration was accomplished.

Neither the Army nor the War Relocation Authority relished the idea of taking men, women, and children from their homes, their shops, and their farms. So the military and civilian agencies alike determined to do the job as a democracy should: with real consideration for the people involved.

First attention was given to the problems of sabotage and espionage. Now, here at San Francisco, for example, convoys were being made up within sight of possible Axis agents. There were more Japanese in Los Angeles than in any other area. In nearby San Pedro, houses and hotels, occupied almost exclusively by Japanese, were within a stone’s throw of a naval air base, shipyards, oil wells. Japanese fishermen had every opportunity to watch the movement of our ships. Japanese farmers were living close to vital aircraft plants. So, as a first step, all Japanese were required to move from critical areas such as these.

But, of course, this limited evacuation was a solution to only part of the problem. The larger problem, the uncertainty of what would happen among these people in case of a Japanese invasion, still remained. That is why the commanding General of the Western Defense Command determined that all Japanese within the coastal areas should move inland.