

SECRET

EDDAS
ASST. J. McCANN

25 July 1944

Major General H. C. Pratt
Commanding General
Southern Defense Command
Fort Sam Houston, Texas

Dear General Pratt:

Attached you will find copy of letter dated July 19, 1944, from Mr. Fortas of the Department of the Interior and a copy of my reply. In this letter Mr. Fortas indicates that the War Relocation Authority is withdrawing from its prior position under which it has not been releasing for resettlement within the military zones of the Eastern or Southern Defense Commands persons of Japanese ancestry as to whom the Joint Board has recommended against indefinite leave.

I believe that part of the background of this decision does not appear in this letter. The general problem of the resettlement of persons of Japanese ancestry was recently discussed with the President. He indicated that, although there might be no objection to the return of a few carefully screened families to the West Coast in localities where they would be accepted, the best solution of the problem, for the present at least, would be to extend the distribution of families of Japanese ancestry throughout the rest of the United States. The result has been a reemphasis on the part of the War Relocation Authority of the relocation program in the other areas of the country.

Under the circumstances, therefore, the War Department has not thought it advisable to interpose any objection to this decision.

Sincerely,

(SIGNED) JOHN J. McGLAY



Enc.

CC ltr 19 Jul 44 fm Mr. Fortas
CC ltr 25 Jul 44 ASW reply.

Note: A letter with the same wording as above has also been sent to Lt. Gen. George Grunert, the Commanding General, EDC.

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THE SECRETARY OF WAR
WASHINGTON

July 19, 1944
25 July 1944

My dear Mr. McCloy:

In his letter of December 14, 1943, the Director of the War Relocation Authority, Honorable Abe Fortas, you of the reasons for the desirability of the War Relocation Authority, Department of the Interior, Washington, 25, D. C., Southern Defense Command, without waiting for clearance of the cases by the Japanese-American Joint Board. In that letter, Dear Mr. Fortas, I advised you, however, that in any case where the Joint Board had recommended against the issuance of indefinite leave to the evacuees, this is to acknowledge your letter of July 19, 1944, even though he might in which you indicate that the War Relocation Authority proposes to withdraw from the agreement under which it has not been releasing for resettlement within the military zones of the Eastern and Southern Defense Commands persons of Japanese ancestry as to whom the Joint Board has recommended against indefinite leave. Since then the Authority has carefully worked out investigatory procedures for an informing the Commanding Generals of the Eastern and Southern Defense Commands of this action. The criteria established by the Authority are eligible for release from the centers. The Authority Sincerely, additional precautions before releasing any evacuee who has received a Joint Board negative recommendation. No such person is eligible for release from a relocation center until after a supplemental investigation and leave clearance has been granted by the Washington office of the Authority. The adequacy of these screening techniques is amply demonstrated by the excellent record established by the evacuees -- now 74,000 in number -- who have been granted indefinite leave from relocation centers.

(SIGNED) JOHN J. McCLOY

The military situation on the East Coast has improved substantially even since the date of Mr. Myer's letter. In view of this and in view of the effectiveness of the War Relocation Authority's screening procedures, any additional precautions with respect to the issuance of leave to the Eastern Defense Command or to the Southern Coastal Zone appears to be unnecessary. For that matter, as Mr. Myer indicated, the restrictions in

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THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

COPY

July 19, 1944

My dear Mr. McCloy:

In his letter of December 14, 1943, the Director of the War Relocation Authority informed you of the reasons for the decision of the War Relocation Authority to begin releasing evacuees directly from relocation centers to destinations within the Eastern Defense Command or the coastal area of the Southern Defense Command, without waiting for clearance of the cases by the Japanese-American Joint Board. In that letter he further informed you, however, that in any case where the Joint Board had recommended against the issuance of indefinite leave the evacuee would not thereafter be released to those areas, even though he might be eligible for leave to other parts of the country. After further careful consideration, I now believe that it is necessary to discontinue the last mentioned restriction.

As Mr. Myer pointed out in his letter, the situation has changed markedly since July 1942, when the War Relocation Authority agreed to impose restrictions on issuance of leave to areas in the Eastern Defense Command. Since then the Authority has carefully worked out investigatory procedures for sifting the evacuees and has segregated those deemed dangerous to the national security. Only persons whose records are clear under the criteria established by the Authority are eligible for release from the centers. The Authority has taken additional precautions before releasing any evacuee who has received a Joint Board negative recommendation. No such person is eligible for release from a relocation center until after a supplemental investigation has been conducted and leave clearance has been granted by the Washington office of the Authority. The adequacy of these screening techniques is amply demonstrated by the excellent record established by the evacuees -- now 24,000 in number -- who have been granted indefinite leave from relocation centers.

The military situation on the East Coast has improved substantially even since the date of Mr. Myer's letter. In view of this and in view of the effectiveness of the War Relocation Authority's screening procedures, any additional precaution with respect to the issuance of leave to the Eastern Defense Command or to the Southern Coastal Zone appears to be unnecessary. For that matter, as Mr. Myer indicated, the restriction is

Assistant Secretary of War.

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actually ineffectual, because it cannot prevent evacuees from coming into those areas if they wish to adopt the simple expedient of first obtaining leave to go to other parts of the country. Many evacuees with negative Joint Board recommendations have done just this.

I believe, therefore, that the restriction is both unnecessary and ineffective from a security standpoint. It nevertheless operates as a decided deterrent to the relocation of evacuees.

One of our primary objectives is to obtain as wide a dispersal of evacuees as possible, and as quickly as possible, throughout the country. However, relocation in some of the Western States has reached a saturation point and relocation in some states in the Midwest is rapidly reaching that stage. The Eastern States afford us our best opportunities for relocating families now in relocation centers. So long as the restriction is in effect, however, we cannot take advantage of these relocation opportunities. There are thousands of persons in relocation centers whom we cannot persuade to relocate in the East because some family member, though determined to be eligible for leave to any other part of the country outside the evacuated areas, has a negative Joint Board recommendation.

Full utilization of the Eastern States in relocating evacuees is also necessary to minimize a potentially dangerous post-war problem. The distance from the evacuated areas, as well as the more favorable community acceptance that is found in many eastern localities, provides considerable assurance that evacuees relocating in the East will not return to the West Coast when the exclusion orders are rescinded, but will remain in the East permanently.

In view of these considerations, I am convinced that it is in the best interest of the Government to remove the restriction and I am instructing the Director of the War Relocation Authority to do so.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ ABE FORTAS

Acting Secretary of the Interior.

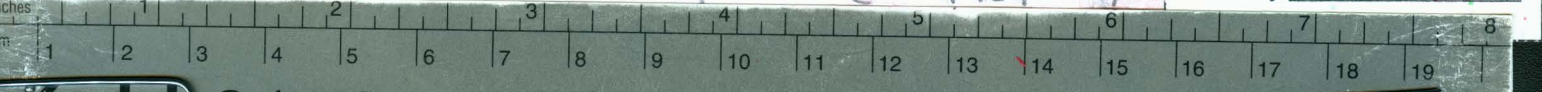
Hon. John J. McCloy,
Assistant Secretary of War.

as above has also been sent to Lt. Gen. George Grunert, the Commanding General, EDC.

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Joint Board
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WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

I carefully considered **WASHINGTON** the material in your draft and am of the opinion that the changes in present procedure suggested there would not result in materially improving the present procedure now in operation and would not be of July 9, 1943 assistance to the WRA in its relocation program. In fact, I do not believe that the changes that have been suggested would accomplish the

Hon. John J. McCloy, Assistant Secretary of War, War Department, Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. McCloy: I should like to suggest that present procedure be broadened by sending this will acknowledge receipt of your letter of June 25 enclosing a draft of a proposed letter to the Director of the Naval Intelligence and the Federal Bureau of Investigation dealing with various matters relating to the Japanese-American Joint Board and the Office of the Provost Marshal General.

Under the system now being followed, the eligibility of an evacuee for employment in a vital war plant is determined after a special field investigation and record check in the Western Defense Command. This step in the procedure for determining eligibility to work in vital war plants has been taken by the Provost Marshal General's office and it is recognized, of course, that it is this office which decides upon the steps to be taken and the extent of an investigation to determine eligibility for employment in private war plants.

Several weeks are required to complete an investigation to determine eligibility of an evacuee for employment in vital war plants. Members of the WRA staff engaged in relocation work report that it is now difficult as a practical matter to handle job offers for evacuees where the source of the offer is a vital war plant employer. As a consequence, I have instructed the Relocation Officers to postpone handling job offers coming from vital war plants for the time being and to wait, before pursuing this type of offer further, until a panel of pre-cleared evacuees begins to be approved and issued by the Joint Board. When this panel begins to be forthcoming it ought to be possible to do some placement of evacuees in vital war plants. Such job offers in the meantime will, of course, be lost but during the summer months it should be possible for the Relocation Officers to use extra efforts to place evacuees in fields of enterprise outside the scope of vital war plant production.

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I carefully considered the proposals suggested in your draft and am of the opinion that the changes in present procedure suggested there would not result in materially improving the present procedure now in operation and would not be of substantial assistance to the WRA in its relocation program. In fact, I do not believe that the changes that have been suggested would accomplish the purpose of assuring some evacuee employment in vital war plants nearly as well as the procedure which has been put into operation after considerable discussion about the problems involved and the objectives desired to be accomplished.

Rather than alter the present procedure, as proposed in your letter, I should like to suggest that present procedure be broadened by sending out to the Western Defense Command for field investigation or record check all of the cases which fall within the so-called white classification. Another suggestion that I should like to make in connection with the present procedure is that a more clear definition or description of the term "vital war plant" be furnished us.

I want to call attention to a statement in your letter with regard to the Southern Military Area which is not in accord with my understanding of the agreement with the War Department. The area in the Southern Military Area to be checked first with the military authorities before issuing indefinite leave from the relocation centers to go into such place is the territory immediately adjacent to the Gulf and not the entire Southern Military area.

In connection with the proposal made in your letter that the jurisdiction of the Board be enlarged to include cases of alien Japanese and Japanese-Americans who were not in relocation centers at the time the questionnaires were executed, I do not feel competent to express an opinion since the War Relocation Authority is confining itself to those persons of Japanese ancestry who were evacuated from the West Coast.

In the last paragraph of your proposed letter it is stated that the War Relocation Authority will keep the Provost Marshal General's office currently informed of all persons released from the relocation centers on indefinite leave and the place of initial employment. Whenever the Provost Marshal General's office makes a request to us for this information, we will be glad to furnish it. I do not believe, however, that this information should be substituted as an alternative for the notification to Defense and Service Commanders of the names

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of persons eligible for employment in vital war plants. It appears to me that the preparation of a panel of evacuees who have been cleared for work in vital war plants is essential to effective placement of these people and that it will be necessary for the Defense and Service Commanders, as well as the WRA Relocation Officers in the field, to have such lists available.

To: Capt Joseph D. Hayes Sincerely,

(signed) D.S. Myer

Director

1. Necessary action.
2. Necessary action and direct reply.
3. Nec. action and prep. of reply for sig. of The Asst. Secy. of War.
4. Nec. action and prep. of reply for sig. of the Executive.
5. Preparation of memo. to include with reply.
6. Preparation of memo. on which to base personal reply.
7. Remark and recommendation.
8. Notation and filing instruction.

By direction of The Assistant Secretary of War:

*for m. Howe
Capt RA
Asst Secy*

Form No. 1
(Rev. 1-10-50)

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WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

Washington

December 18, 1943

EMERGENCY INSTRUCTION

RESTRICTED

To: All Project Directors

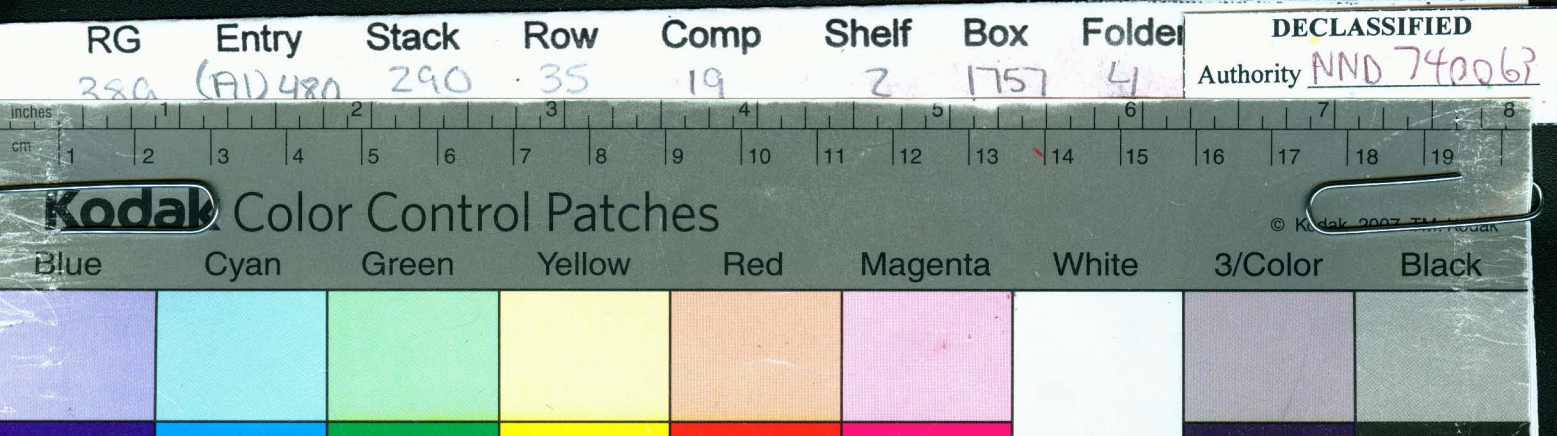
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I am enclosing a copy of a letter which I have just sent to Mr. John J. McCloy, Assistant Secretary of War. This letter is self-explanatory.

You will note that those who have been considered by the Joint Board and refused Eastern Defense Command clearance are not to be given leave for direct relocation within the Eastern Defense Command.

D. L. Myer
Director

OM-680



WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

copy

Washington

December 14, 1943

Hon. John J. McCloy
 Assistant Secretary of War
 War Department
 Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. McCloy:

Previous to the issuance of our leave regulations in July 1942, we discussed the releasing of evacuees from relocation centers to the Eastern Defense Command and coastal areas of the Southern Defense Command. At that time I agreed at your request not to release evacuees under our regular procedure, directly from relocation centers to these areas, without a special clearance of each evacuee by the Commanding General. With the setting up of the Joint Board this special clearance was replaced by the investigations of that board. This Authority has scrupulously lived up to this oral agreement. However, conditions have now changed so much that I feel this special check on persons being released directly to these areas is no longer necessary nor practical.

Doubt as to need for continuing the restriction. In July 1942 we were considering the evacuee population as a whole - disloyal as well as loyal. The repatriation program had barely begun and the military registration was yet months away. Records were incomplete; we were groping for standards and criteria upon which to base our procedures for sifting those dangerous to the national security from the remainder. During the intervening months we have carefully worked out our sifting procedures, as you know. Our segregation program is now virtually completed, and only those persons of whose loyalty we are reasonably sure are being considered for seasonal or indefinite leave to any area. While it is true that we still have a few people in our centers on whom we have not completed our final investigation, all those of doubtful eligibility have been placed on a stop list pending final disposition of their cases.

It is apparent, too, that the war in the Atlantic and in the Pacific has greatly changed in our favor since July 1942. I have noted particularly that dim-out and other precautionary measures

OM-680

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Hon. John J. McCloy-2-Dec. 14, 1943

have been considerably relaxed and modified. In view of the improved military situation with respect to the East Coast and the effectiveness of our screening procedures, it would not seem inconsistent to remove the additional precaution provided by the Eastern Defense Command clearance - a precaution which, as I shall point out subsequently in this letter, is proving to be increasingly ineffectual from a practical standpoint. The requirement of Eastern Defense Command clearance for persons who are eligible under our procedures for relocation elsewhere entails the use of manpower that could be put to better use in other phases of our war endeavor, and if there is no clear need for continuing the requirement I believe that it should be eliminated.

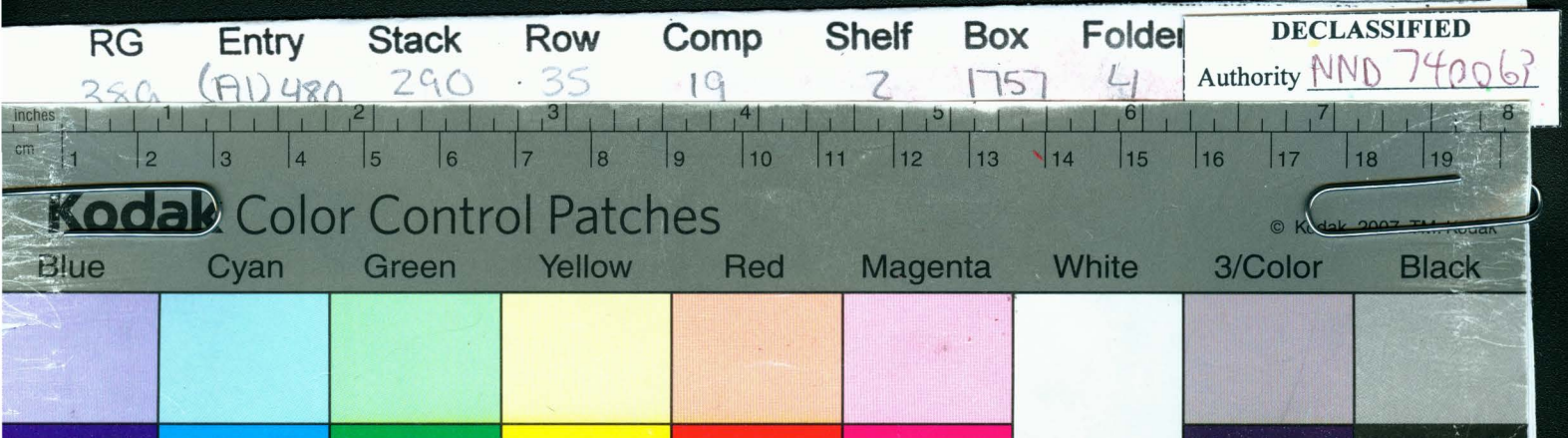
I should also like to point out that most of the citizen evacuees have now been processed by the Joint Board. Aliens to whom we have granted leave must keep the Department of Justice notified of their whereabouts, obtain permits for subsequent travel, and otherwise conform to alien enemy control regulations. These regulations are an adequate precaution, in the judgment of the Federal agency charged with supervision of enemy aliens, and I find it difficult to justify imposition of an additional clearance as to them.

Effect on the program of the War Relocation Authority. The requirement of Eastern Defense Command clearance is becoming increasingly burdensome with respect to our relocation program. The fact that the requirement still exists, despite the screening of those of doubtful loyalty casts a reflection on our segregation program and on our leave procedures which in my opinion is not warranted by the facts, and which robs us of many of the benefits which we expected to flow from the segregation program and from our screening process.

The evacuees themselves feel the additional clearance requirement keenly - to cite one instance, wives and parents of Japanese-American boys now in the Army find it very difficult to understand why they must await still another clearance before going to the eastern and southern coastal areas.

In addition, the delay occasioned by special requirements for Eastern Defense Command clearance has slowed up the relocation of evacuees. Various employers badly in need of workers have attempted to recruit evacuee labor for eastern and southern coastal areas but have given up because of the time element involved in obtaining the additional clearance. Many evacuees with relocation

OM-680



opportunities within the Eastern Defense Command have become extremely discouraged by the delays and decided not to relocate during the war. Many other evacuees cleared by the Joint Board wanting to relocate in the East, with good employment offers, have been reluctant to relocate because some family member has not yet received Eastern Defense Command clearance. We regard these facts to be particularly unfortunate - not merely because of their effect on the relocation program, but because they reduce a potential labor supply for an area that is important in the war effort and that has not yet received evacuees in any considerable number.

Effectiveness of the restriction. As you know, our original agreement does not prevent evacuees who have been released from relocation centers from leaving their original destinations and travelling into the Eastern Defense Command and coastal areas of the Southern Defense Command. Many evacuees have done so, without prompting or encouragement on our part. Employers and employees are beginning to regard the special clearance as unnecessary red tape which works a hardship on evacuees who are sincerely trying to relocate in these areas. It in no way prevents any evacuee from eventually going to these areas if he wants to go to the trouble of first obtaining a job outside the areas and then moving on. An increasing number of employers and other interested and responsible people are pointing out to us that from a security aspect this arrangement is ridiculous.

In view of the foregoing considerations, I feel that I must advise you that we shall hereafter not consider ourselves bound by the understanding we reached when conditions were so different. I am notifying each Project Director of this decision. We shall not, however, release to the Eastern Defense Command or the coastal area of the Southern Defense Command evacuees who have been processed by the Joint Board and turned down for Eastern Defense Command clearance, even though some of these individuals under our regulations may be eligible for leave to other areas.

I am sure that you will agree with the necessity on my part for reaching such a decision.

Sincerely,

/s/ D. S. Myer

Director

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