

evacuation of the Japanese developed. On 10 December an agent of the Treasury Department reported to Army authorities that "an estimated 20,000 Japanese in the San Francisco metropolitan area were ready for organized action." Without checking the authenticity of the report, the Ninth Corps Area staff hurriedly completed a plan for their evacuation that was approved by the corps area commander. The next morning the Army called the local FBI chief, who "scoffed at the whole affair as the wild imaginings of a discharged former FBI man." This stopped any further local action for the moment, but the corps area commander duly reported the incident to Washington and expressed the hope that "it may have the effect of arousing the War Department to some action looking to the establishment of an area or areas for the detention of aliens."⁶ His recommendation that "plans be made for large-scale internment" was forwarded by the Chief of Staff's office to G-2 and to the Provost Marshal General.⁷ On 19 December, and apparently as one consequence of this initial flurry, General DeWitt, as commander of the Western Defense Command, recommended to GHQ "that action be initiated at the earliest practicable date to collect all alien subjects fourteen years of age and over, of enemy nations and remove them to the Zone of the Interior."⁸

However General DeWitt may have felt during December about the treatment of enemy aliens, he was then firmly opposed to any evacuation of citizens. In a telephone conversation he had on 26 December with Maj. Gen. Allen W. Gullion, the Provost Marshal General, the latter remarked that he had just been visited by a representative of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, who had asked for a roundup of all Japanese in the Los Angeles area. In response, General DeWitt said (and General Gullion expressed agreement with what he said):

I thought that thing out to my satisfaction. . . . if we go ahead and arrest the 93,000 Japanese, native born and foreign born, we are going to have an awful job on our hands and are very liable to alienate the loyal Japanese from disloyal. . . . I'm very doubtful that it would be common sense procedure to try and intern or to intern 117,000 Japanese in this theater. . . . I told the governors of all the states that those people should be watched better if they were watched by the police and people of the community in which they live and have been living for years. . . . and then inform the F.B.I. or the military authorities of any suspicious action so we could take necessary steps to handle it . . . rather than try to intern all those people, men, women and children, and hold them under military control and under guard. I don't think it's a sensible

⁶ Memo, G-2 Fourth Army for CofS Fourth Army, 11 Dec 41, WDC-CAD 014.31 Enemy Aliens.

⁷ OCS Index, 11 Dec 41, Tally Card info re OCS 21227-38 and 39.

⁸ Ltr, CG WDC to CG GHQ, 19 Dec 41, WDC-CAD 014.31.