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Japanese Activities and Intelligence Machine in the Western Hemisphere (declassified 2/27/1985)

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WAR DEPARTMENT
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FPLV) 2/27/65

January 3, 1942.
(Date)

Subject: Japanese Activities and Intelligence Machine in the
Western Hemisphere.

Summary of Information:

A. Recent Japanese Activities in Latin America. Recent reports have been received of suspicious movements of Japanese in various parts of Latin America, particularly Mexico. Approximately 5,000 Japanese are congregating at some undetermined point in strategic Baja California. In this connection, 100 of a Japanese population of 600 in and around Ensenada, recently left the region in a ship anchored off the coast.

The Japanese practice of cloaking subversive operations with "legitimate business fronts" exists in Mexico as well as in the United States. The Japanese have placed Colonel Tadafumi Waki, I.J.A., in an important position within their Intelligence Network in Mexico. Reports believed reliable indicate that Colonel Waki has in his possession maps of strategic areas in the Hawaiian Islands.

In Peru it is reported that the 30,000 or more Japanese living there are highly organized and that, following anti-Japanese riots, they distributed rifles to all their establishments. In the United States there is a possible infiltration of Japanese espionage agents through Cuban and Florida ports. A similar danger exists on the Pacific Coast and Mexican border.

Since the outbreak of hostilities, Spanish Consuls in the United States have taken over all official business for the Japanese Consulates. Japanese and Spanish Fascist collaboration is carried on extensively in Mexico and the Philippines through the following organizations: Las Misiones Jesuite del Japon, Sociedad Nipo-Espanola, Falange Exterior Espanola, and Liga Anti-Comintern Espanola.

B. Japanese Intelligence Machine in Western Hemisphere. In December, 1940, it became apparent that the Japanese were going to effect a reorganization of their Intelligence Network in this hemisphere

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by intensifying the espionage activities of non-political agencies here.

In streamlining their Intelligence Machine the Japanese have been guided by two major considerations--that of a system of "total intelligence" such as the Germans have developed; and establishment of a completely integrated intelligence organization which in time of war and the breaking off of official relations would be able to take over intelligence operations on a major scale.

The focal point of the Japanese espionage effort has been the determination of the total strength of the United States. In anticipation of possible open conflict with this country, Japan vigorously utilized every available agency to secure military, naval, and commercial information, paying particular attention to West Coast, Panama Canal, and Hawaii. Surveys were made of persons and organizations opposing United States' intervention in the European War, and close attention was paid to all anti-Jewish, Communist, Negro, and Labor Movements.

Although never fully developed, this new espionage organization was characterized by a high degree of decentralization. The general pattern included individuals, small groups, and commercial organizations functioning separately yet directly controlled by Imperial Japanese Government through Embassy and Consulate.

The new program provided for the utilization of citizens of foreign extraction, aliens, Communists, Negroes, Labor union members, anti-Semites, and individuals having access to Government Departments, experimental laboratories, factories, transportation facilities and governmental organizations of various kinds. Nisei and Japanese aliens were not overlooked.

In event of open hostilities, Mexico was to be the Japanese intelligence nerve center in the Western Hemisphere, and in anticipation of war, U.S.-Latin American intelligence routes were established, involving extensive cooperation among Japanese, German and Italian intelligence organizations.

In this connection there should be kept in mind the proximity of San Diego to Tijuana and of El Centro to Mexicali, along with Yuma, Nogales, El Paso, Laredo, and Brownsville, all known Japanese "post offices" and espionage centers.

Outstanding among the Japanese espionage projects was their comprehensive surveys of the entire western coast of North America.

Japanese Propaganda in the United States has for the most.

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part been under direction of a special division of the Japanese Foreign Office in Tokyo. Local control was administered through the Embassy in Washington, as well as the Consulates in key cities and Consular Agents in Japanese communities.

2. The Tokyo Club Syndicate. This is an excellent illustration of the extremely complicated interlockings which characterize Japanese groups.

Until recently the Tokyo Club of Los Angeles, with chief subsidiaries, the Nichibei Kogyo Kaisha of Los Angeles and the Tokyo Club of Seattle, constituted the nucleus of a system of gambling clubs from Alaska to Mexico. A widespread decentralized system of Japanese "clubs," labor organizations, and legitimate business groups has been converted into an important unit of the central Japanese Intelligence Network. There can be no doubt that most of the leaders have been and still continue to function as key operatives for the Japanese Government along the West Coast.

It is reported that the Tokyo Club is no longer in existence but it may be that the former leaders have retired behind new "fronts."

3. Japanese Cameriers, Alaska and West Coast. Whether floating or shore-based, American- or foreign-owned, the Alaska cameriers employ a considerable amount of Japanese capital and labor. American leaders in the fishing-canning industry stress the fact that the Japanese involved are scattered in definitely strategic places throughout Alaska, and that there exists the possibility that some of these Japanese may have military or naval connections.

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