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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SPECIAL DIVISION
MEMORANDUM

FE memo 3 18.41
Division of
FAR-EASTERN AFFAIRS
MAR 18 1941
Department of State

March 17, 1941.

FE:

PI:

CONFIDENTIAL

Subject: Evacuation of Americans from
Philippines in emergency.

OFFICE OF PHILIPPINE AFFAIRS
APR 1 1941
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

I shall be glad, if desired, to endeavor to prepare, with your assistance, a reply to the attached airmail letter of February 27 from the High Commissioner at Manila in which he refers to a plan being drawn up by his office and the local U. S. military and naval authorities for the evacuation of Americans from the Philippines in an emergency. The High Commissioner refers in this connection to his telegram no. 8 of January 7, 10 a.m., marked Urgent and Strictly Confidential for the Secretary. I have obtained the telegram from DCR and I find that it was marked File by Mr. Welles' office, no answer having been made so far as I can ascertain. The telegram is attached.

With regard to the High Commissioner's estimate that \$2,500,000 will be needed to evacuate 7,000 Americans from the Islands, I propose that we inform the High Commissioner that we have not engaged in a wholesale evacuation of Americans elsewhere at Government expense during the present war, that we have advised Americans that

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that it is not an obligation of the Government to repatriate citizens, that Congress has not appropriated funds for the purpose, that citizens are expected to provide their own expenses, if necessary by obtaining them from relatives, friends or employers, and that while the Department has been able to provide from special funds available some financial assistance for transportation expenses for destitute Americans in certain hazardous areas, by making loans to them against promissory notes for repayment, those funds are limited and needed for other purposes and the Department is unable to state in advance whether and when and in what amount such funds can be allotted elsewhere. Finally, that a decision as to the help in evacuation which the Government could give will have to await the development of the emergency as the circumstances then, including those attending the availability and safety of transportation, will determine what can be done.

However, the High Commissioner's letter raises, in my mind, an important question of policy. If the Philippines are threatened by an enemy power, are we going to tell and assist Americans there to depart, and thus to subject ourselves to accusation by the Filipinos and others that we are fleeing from our own soil and and leaving our wards,

among

among whom our people have found a pleasant and profitable existence, to face the danger alone? I suggest that we should come to a decision now as it will be too late when the threat, if made, has been translated into enemy action. If the decision should be in the negative, I think we should tell the High Commissioner that we do not contemplate an evacuation of Americans from the Philippines and while the evacuation plans may be completed, as it is well to be prepared against any eventuality, the possibility of their use is most remote. Further, that he will appreciate that the plans should be kept strictly confidential and that, therefore, no action should be taken in their preparation which would publicize their existence. If this view should be approved, I suggest that we also tell the High Commissioner, with reference to his telegram no. 8 of January 7, that he should visualize the remaining of Americans generally in the Philippines in an emergency and plan accordingly, submitting to the Department such recommendations as he may consider it necessary to make to obtain such cooperation as the Department or other agencies of the Government here may be able to afford in providing for the special needs, because of their standards and mode of living, of Americans remaining in the Islands.

Brandt