Japanese Internment Camp Document Based Question

Given the American distrust of the Japanese after Pearl Harbor, relocating Japanese-Americans to internment camps was justified.

Determine the validity of the above statement by using the documents and outside information. Write a thesis statement and a brief outline with topic sentences for the three paragraphs.

Document A

Governor Culbert Olson, California. Radio Speech of February 3, 1942.

It is known that there are Japanese residents of California who have sought to aid the Japanese by way of communicating information, or have shown indications of preparation for fifth column [traitorous organization] activities. General plans have been agreed upon for the movement and placement of the entire adult Japanese population in California at productive and useful employment within the borders of our state and under such surveillance and protection as shall be deemed necessary.

Document B

Fletcher Bowron, Mayor of Los Angeles, Los Angeles Times interview of February 4, 1942.

If we can send our own young men to war, it is nothing less than sickly sentimentality to say that we will do injustice to American-born Japanese to merely put them in a place of safety so that they can do no harm… We in Los Angeles are the ones who will be the human sacrifices if the perfidy [violation of trust] that characterized the attack on Pearl Harbor is ever duplicated on the American continent.
Document C

Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt, testifying before the House Naval Affairs Subcommittee, April 13, 1943:

You needn’t worry about the Italians at all except in certain cases. Also, the same for the Germans except in individual cases. But we must worry about the Japanese all the time until he is wiped off the map…

Document D

Attorney General Francis Biddle to Roosevelt, February 17, 1942:

For several weeks there have been increasing demands for evacuation of all Japanese, aliens and citizens alike, from the West Coast states. A great many West Coast people distrust the Japanese, various special interests would welcome their removal from good farmland and the elimination of their competition… My last advice from the War Department is that there is no evidence of imminent attack and from the F.B.I. that there is no evidence of planned sabotage.

Document E

Martin Dies, Texas Congress member

[Washington is] lax, tolerant, and soft toward the Japanese who have violated American hospitality; Shinto Temples still operate; propaganda outlets still disseminate propaganda material; and Japanese, both alien and American citizens, still spy for the Japanese government.
DOCUMENT F

Parents and children wearing their ID tags at the Oakland railroad terminal.

By Dorothea Lange from Bernard K. Johnpoll.

Document G

Fishing boats left behind by incarcerated Japanese Americans were later sold for a fraction of their value.

By Dorothea Lange from Bernard K. Johnpoll.
Document H

Ben Yorita, teenage Japanese-American interred in an Idaho camp. 1942-44.

These camps were technically relocation centers and there was no effort to hold us in them, but they didn’t try actively to relocate us until much later. On my own initiative I tried to get out as soon as I could, and started writing letters to friends around the country. I found a friend in Salt Lake City who agreed to sponsor me for room and board, and he got his boss to agree to hire me. I got out in May 1943. I wasn’t satisfied with my job in Salt Lake City, though. My friend and I left for Chicago after a few months. I enjoyed Chicago because there people didn’t care what nationality you were.

Document I

Philip Hayasaka, teenage Japanese-American interred at Camp Harmony in Oregon. 1942.

It was kind of interesting how different people reacted when they came to Camp Harmony to see friends, and how we reacted in return. Friends from Seattle would come down to see me, and we had to talk through barbed-wire fences. (Nobody was permitted to stand closer than three feet to the fence, which meant conversations were held at least six feet from each other, with people standing and watching.) There was one instance when I saw a close friend from high school just outside the fence, and he had come down to see me. He hadn’t seen me inside, so I hid rather than going out to see him. The whole evacuation did funny things to your mind.