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Papers of Harry S. Truman: White House Central Files—Official File

1290-B

January 16, 1953

Dear Bedall:

As you know, I consider the establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency one of the most important steps which I have taken, as President, in the interests of our national security. An effective intelligence service, which this country now possesses, is a vital element in our efforts for a just and lasting peace.

As Director of Central Intelligence since 1950, following your superior service as Ambassador to Moscow, you have successfully and faithfully accomplished your mission of developing the Central Intelligence Agency into an efficient and permanent arm of the Government's national security structure. During this critical period the far-reaching improvements and strengthening which you have introduced in the intelligence field have been of immeasurable value to me and the other members of the National Security Council in dealing with the difficult problems facing us.

I am firmly convinced that no President ever had such a wealth of vital information made available to him in such a useful manner as I have received through CIA. I want you to know how deeply I appreciate and admire the conscientious and loyal way in which you have accomplished your mission. I am equally sure that future Presidents will benefit substantially from the outstanding work which you have done in developing the Central Intelligence Agency.

As I prepare to leave the Presidency, I want to say thank you to a true friend, a real patriot, and a public administrator of the highest calibre.

Very sincerely yours,

HARRY S. TRUMAN

General Walter Bedell Smith, U.S.A.,
Director of Central Intelligence,
Washington, D. C.

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