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OSS Archives File  
Budget 1946  
Letter from Adm. Leahy to  
The Honorable Clarence Cannon  
ABD - 2/11/52

25 May 1945.

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The Honorable  
Clarence Cannon,  
Chairman,  
House Appropriations Committee.

My dear Mr. Cannon:

Pursuant to your request, transmitted orally by Mr. John K. Pugh, for a statement as to whether or not General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz desire the services of the Office of Strategic Services in the Pacific war, the following messages from General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz are quoted for your information.

From General MacArthur, Commanding Southwest Pacific Area:

"No statement has emanated from this headquarters nor so far as known from this area in comment on OSS. Any items that may have appeared in the press along this line must be regarded as speculative conjecture.

"The OSS has not up to the present time operated within this area, I know little of its methods, have no control of its agencies, and consequently have no plans for its future employment."

From Admiral Nimitz, Commanding Pacific Ocean Areas:

"Owing to the character of the war in the Pacific Ocean Areas which has been primarily naval, amphibious, and aerial, the employment of the agencies of the Office of Strategic Services in the Pacific Ocean Areas has been very limited.

"The minor services rendered could have been rendered equally effectively by appropriate agencies of the War and Navy Departments.

"Although OSS has been anxious to assist and cooperate it is my considered opinion that better results would have been obtained and can be obtained in the future if the missions now assigned to the OSS are reassigned to the War and Navy Departments insofar as the Pacific Ocean Areas are concerned.

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"I have no adequate basis for comment on the need for the OSS in land campaigns in large land masses."

In addition to the foregoing, there are also quoted for your information the following messages in the same connection from General Wedemeyer, General Sultan and General McNarney:

From General Wedemeyer, Commanding U.S. Army Forces, China Theater:

"Inasmuch as OSS and Navy Group China are the only American organizations in this theater trained and capable of carrying out demolitions, commando operations and clandestine intelligence activity, it is considered that the potential value of OSS to this theater is high.

"Presently authorized for OSS is a strength of 2000 United States personnel in this theater and this number is being approached rapidly. When OSS reaches authorized strength and its efforts are closely integrated with offensive operations intended feel certain their approved projects will materially assist theater in its assigned mission.

"OSS is now training 20 Commando Groups and intelligence teams and will furnish United States personnel to these units as advisors. These groups and others already trained are to be charged with responsible missions in direct support of contemplated future plans."

From General Sultan, Commanding U.S. Army Forces, India-Burma Theater:

"During the recent campaign in north Burma, OSS furnished most effective assistance by organizing Kachin irregulars to provide intelligence and to harass enemy lines of communications. Now that this campaign has ended, the OSS Detachment which carried out this useful work is being transferred to China Theater.

"Although OSS has furnished certain limited assistance to British operations in the Arakan, its combat role in further Southeast Asia Command operations in Burma is negligible and can be disregarded.

"At the present time, the primary mission of the India-Burma Theater is to support China Theater. OSS is not required by IBT for the execution of this mission.

"Insofar as OSS activities in this theater are concerned, it is believed that the functions presently being performed by OSS would be more economically and efficiently accomplished were the existing organization changed to bring OSS wholly within the War and Navy Departments, thus insuring control through normal command channels."

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From General McNarney, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander,  
Mediterranean:

"Office of Strategic Services activities in this theater have been to carry out special operations and to provide secret intelligence.

"These activities contributed greatly to the success of our operations in Italy and could not have been performed effectively in the absence of trained OSS personnel and facilities.

"OSS personnel did an outstanding job in directing and coordinating Partisan activities and their facilities were indispensable in the negotiations culminating in the German surrender in Italy.

"So long as the situation in Italy, Austria, and the Balkans remains unstable, it is essential to continue the secret intelligence activities of OSS in this Theater.

"Special operations, however, are no longer required and accordingly the OSS staff in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations can be reduced, on the basis of a rough estimate, to approximately 20% in 1946 of its average Mediterranean Theater of Operations strength for the fiscal year 1945. Recommend that Office of Strategic Services be provided with sufficient funds in the fiscal year 1946 to continue their reduced activities in Mediterranean Theater and to permit trained OSS personnel to be redeployed to the Pacific."

Trusting that the above will give you the information desired,

Sincerely yours,

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

/s/  
WILLIAM D. LEAHY,  
Fleet Admiral, U.S. Navy,  
Chief of Staff to the  
Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy.

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