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26 JUN 1947

The Honorable Clare Hoffman, Chairman  
House Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments  
House Office Building  
Washington 25, D. C.

My dear Mr. Chairman:

It has been brought to our attention that numerous newspaper articles have stated that the Central Intelligence Group has usurped various departmental intelligence functions and forced established organizations out of the field. These charges have been particularly leveled at the operation by the Central Intelligence Group of clandestine intelligence activities. These charges are not true.

It has long been felt by those who have successfully operated clandestine intelligence systems that such work must be centralized within one agency. As a corollary to this proposition, it has likewise been proven that a multitude of espionage agencies results in two shortcomings: first, agents tend to uncover each other or block each other's funds or aims and neutralize each other, being unaware of identical objectives; second, one agency tends to hoard its own special information or attempts to be the first to deliver a choice piece of information to higher authorities. The latter type of competition does not permit the overall evaluation of intelligence on a given subject, as each agency is competing for prestige.

For the reasons cited above, which were highlighted by experience during the last war, it was felt inadvisable, after due study by interdepartmental committees, to permit the several departments to conduct independent clandestine operations. For this reason, the National Intelligence Act, under date of 8 July 1946, issued the following directive, which is a pertinent part:

"Pursuant to the President's Letter of 22 January 1946, designating this Authority as responsible for planning, developing and coordinating all Federal foreign intelligence activities, so as to insure the most effective accomplishment of the intelligence mission related to the national security . . . the Director of Central Intelligence is hereby directed to perform the following services of common concern, which this Authority has determined can be more efficiently accomplished centrally: Conduct of all organized Federal espionage and counter-espionage operations outside the United States and its possessions for the collection of foreign intelligence information required for the national security. . . ."

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This Authority reaffirms this directive as of the utmost importance to the national security, for the reasons outlined above. Similarly, the Central Intelligence Group should be free to assume, under our direction, or the subsequent direction of a National Security Council, the performance, for the benefit of the intelligence agencies of the Government, of such services, of common concern, including the field of collection, as this Authority or a subsequent Council determines can be more efficiently performed centrally.

Sincerely yours,

Secretary of State

Secretary of War

Secretary of The Navy

Personal Representative  
of the President

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