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Statement of

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOYT S. VANDENBERG
Director of Central Intelligence

Before The
Armed Services Committee
of the
United States Senate

On S. 758,
"The National Security Act of 1947".

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Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

My appearance before your Committee this morning is in support of Section 202 of the proposed National Security Act of 1947. This section of the bill would provide the United States, for the first time in its history, with a Central Intelligence service created by Act of Congress. Our present organization, the Central Intelligence Group -- which I have the privilege of directing -- has been in existence since January 1946, by authority of an Executive Directive of the President.

Since the day that the Central Intelligence Group was established, the Directors of Central Intelligence -- my predecessor, Admiral Souers, and I -- have looked forward to the time when we could come before the Congress and request permanent status through legislative enactment.

I sincerely urge adoption of the intelligence provisions of this bill. Section 202 will enable us to do our share in maintaining the national security. It will form a firm basis on which we can construct the finest intelligence service in the world.

In my opinion, a strong intelligence system is equally if not more essential in peace than in war. Upon us has fallen leadership in world affairs. The oceans have shrunk, until today both Europe and Asia border the United States almost as do Canada and Mexico. The interests, intentions and capabilities of the various nations on these land masses must be fully known to our national policy makers. We must have this intelligence if we are to be forewarned against possible acts of aggression, and if we are to be armed against disaster in an era of atomic warfare.

I know you gentlemen understand that the nature of some of the work we are doing makes it undesirable -- from the security standpoint -- to discuss certain activities with too much freedom. I feel that the people of this country, having experienced the disaster of Pearl Harbor and the appalling consequences of a global war, are now sufficiently informed in their approach to intelligence to understand that an organization such as ours -- or the Intelligence Divisions of the Armed Services, or the F.B.I. -- cannot expose certain of their activities to public gaze. I therefore ask your indulgence -- and through you the indulgence of the people -- to limit my remarks on the record this morning to a general approach to the subject of a Central Intelligence Agency.

I think it can be said without successful challenge that before Pearl Harbor we did not have an intelligence service in this country comparable to that of Great Britain, or France, or Russia, or Germany, or Japan. We did not have one because the people of the United States would not accept it. It was felt that there was something Un-American

A Central Intelligence Agency, properly cognizant of the intelligence requirements of the various departments and agencies, is best equipped to handle the dissemination to all departments of the material to meet these requirements.

The complexities of intelligence, the immensities of information available virtually for the asking, are so great that this information must reach a central spot for orderly and efficient dissemination to all possible users within the Government.

In addition to the functions mentioned, it is necessary for a Central Intelligence Agency to perform others of common concern to two or more agencies. These are projects which it is believed can be most efficiently or economically performed centrally. An example of such a service is the monitoring of foreign voice broadcasts. There are many departments of the Government vitally interested in this matter. No one department should shoulder the burden of its operation and expense. Nor should two or more agencies be duplicating the operation. It should rest with a central agency to operate such a service for all. Similarly, we have centralized the activities of the various foreign document branches which were operated by some of the services individually or jointly during the war.

I would call your attention to the fact that the kind of men who are able to execute the intelligence mission successfully are not too frequently found. They must be given an opportunity to become part of a secure and permanent agency which will grow in ability with the constant exercise of its functions in the fields of operations and research. We must have the best available men, working in the best possible atmosphere, and with the finest tools this Government can afford.

During the war, intelligence agencies were able to attract a great number of extremely intelligent, widely experienced, able men. Some are still available and might become members of the Central Intelligence Agency, should it become possible to insure them that career which was recommended by the Congressional Committee report I cited previously. It is very difficult to recruit such men before the will of Congress is made known. I do not wish to belabor this point, but it is most important.

In conclusion, I respectfully urge the passage of Section 202 of the bill under discussion, together with such additional legislation as is needed to make for operational efficiency. I urge your increased and continued interest in an intelligence system which can do much toward safeguarding our national security.

Such a system indicates the necessity for a Central Intelligence Agency to augment and coordinate these intelligence missions and functions of the armed services and the Department of State. Such an agency should be given the authority to provide research and analysis in the interest of national intelligence. We know that the passage of such legislation will enable us to establish a field attractive to men of outstanding background and experience in intelligence. These individuals will meet the challenge of the task before them -- the most stimulating in which men can serve their country -- by the production of a positive safeguard to the national security.