

AT FAREWELL GATHERING OF OSS EMPLOYEES

General Donovan and Fellow Members of OSS:

I have been asked to present to the General on behalf of his friends a gift which will serve as a remembrance of our war years under his leadership.

In matters which affect our sentiments so sincerely, it is hard to find adequate expression.

Let me say as simply as I can that we are very proud to have stood with him at Armageddon. At the outbreak of global war, he was given a fantastic assignment -- to create and operate a secret intelligence agency after the enemy had erected his barbed wire and contrived every conceivable scheme to make himself impregnable. The General created the organization; he formulated the program, he devised the tactics; he penetrated the barriers. He personally attended the invasions.

History will know and record only in part the value of that service.

As the perilous years passed, he extemporized; he devised; he asked for the improbable and confidently achieved it. He capitalized his weaknesses and attacked. Inspired by his personality and his vision, thousands of devoted people took the uneven odds. People of all ages lived or died as duty demanded or circumstances permitted. They killed and were killed alone or in groups, in jungles, in cities, by sea or air. They organized resistance where there was no resistance. They helped it to grow where it was weak. They assaulted the enemy's mind as well as his body; they helped confuse his will and disrupt his plans.

And with it all, Donovan assembled the brains to evaluate and the competence to estimate the material that flowed back from a thousand vital sources, dealing with the enemy capabilities and intentions and morale, military and civilian, and bottleneck targets, and the web of diplomatic intrigue. General Donovan, all of us, whatever our role, whatever our individual spot in the pattern of your unprecedented task, -- we esteem it a very great privilege to have served our country under your banner.

You were a legend of gallant combat leadership in the First World War.

It would seem that a very full and honorable lifetime of unique experience and training had unconsciously prepared you for your role in World War II.

To the Director of OSS, whose duties are about to terminate, we, your associates, offer our Salute, and Hail and Farewell.

To Donovan, the Man, our Friend, we say -- Au Revoir, Good Luck, and God go with you!

REMARKS OF MAJOR GENERAL WILLIAM J. DONOVAN, USA, DIRECTOR

OF STRATEGIC SERVICES, AT FINAL GATHERING OF OSS EMPLOYEES

28 SEPTEMBER 1945

Men and Women of OSS:

We have come to the end of an unusual experiment. This experiment was to determine whether a group of Americans constituting a cross section of racial origins, of abilities, temperaments and talents could meet and risk an encounter with the long-established and well-trained enemy organizations.

How well that experiment has succeeded is measured by your accomplishments and by the recognition of your achievements. You should feel deeply gratified by President Truman's expression of the purpose of basing a coordinated intelligence service upon the techniques and resources that you have initiated and developed.

This could not have been done if you had not been willing to fuse yourselves into a team -- a team that was made up not only of scholars and research experts and of the active units in operations and intelligence who engaged the

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enemy in direct encounter, but also of the great numbers of our organization who drove our motor vehicles, carried our mail, kept our records and documents and performed those other innumerable duties of administrative services without which no organization can succeed and which, because well done with us, made our activities that much more effective.

When I speak of your achievements that does not mean we did not make mistakes. We were not afraid to make mistakes because we were not afraid to try things that had not been tried before. All of us would like to think that we could have done a better job, but all of you must know that, whatever the errors or failures, you have done an honest and self-respecting job. But more than that, because there existed in this organization a sense of solidarity, you must also have the conviction that this agency, in which each of you played a part, was an effective force.

Within a few days each one of us will be going to new tasks whether in civilian life or in governmental work. You can go with the assurance that you have made a beginning in showing the people of America that only by decisions of national policy based upon accurate information can we have the chance of a peace that will endure.

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My dear General Donovan:

I appreciate very much the work which you and your staff undertook, beginning prior to the Japanese surrender, to liquidate those wartime activities of the Office of Strategic Services which will not be needed in time of peace.

Timely steps should also be taken to conserve those resources and skills developed within your organization which are vital to our peacetime purposes.

Accordingly, I have today directed, by Executive order, that the activities of the Research and Analysis Branch and the Presentation Branch of the Office of Strategic Services be transferred to the State Department. This transfer, which is effective as of October 1, 1945, represents the beginning of the development of a coordinated system of foreign intelligence within the permanent framework of the Government.

Consistent with the foregoing, the Executive order provides for the transfer of the remaining activities of the Office of Strategic Services to the War Department; for the abolition of the Office of Strategic Services; and for the continued orderly liquidation of some of the activities of the Office without interrupting other services of a military nature the need for which will continue for some time.

I want to take this occasion to thank you for the capable leadership you have brought to a vital wartime activity in your capacity as Director of Strategic Services. You may well find satisfaction in the achievements of the Office and take pride in your own contribution to them. These are in themselves large rewards. Great additional reward for your efforts should lie in the knowledge that the peacetime intelligence services of the Government are being erected on the foundation of the facilities and resources mobilized through the Office of Strategic Services during the war.

Sincerely yours,

HARRY S. TRUMAN

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