

4 February 1946

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF WAR

Through: The Assistant Secretary of War
and
Major General S. LeRoy Irwin
Interim Director, SSU, War Department

Subject: Request for Determination of the
Future Status of SSU

On 17 October 1945 I submitted a memorandum to the Assistant Secretary of War, Subject: Status of Morale in Strategic Services Unit, stressing the urgent need for clarification of the status of the SSU if its assets were to be preserved. Since then the liquidation of its wartime activities has been practically completed. Profitable intelligence operations have been maintained, but the assets of the organization continue to be sapped by attrition of high grade personnel, and its morale lowered at a rate accelerated by continuing obscurity in the Unit's future. Assets vanish alarmingly despite the generous and constructive support of the United by all officials of the War Department responsible for its maintenance. Long-range planning and commitments are not possible under the circumstances.

Since the establishment of the Central Intelligence Authority on 22 January 1946, the disposition of the SSU

with respect to that Authority has remained undecided.

Moreover, other disturbing circumstances have arisen which tend further to postpone decision. I refer to criticisms from various sources of certain aspects of SSU tending to raise doubt as to its value as an entity for use in the Central Intelligence Group. Some of these criticisms take the cheap and familiar form of innuendo reflecting on the competence of the personnel and security of the Unit. Distorted facts and sheer opinions are expressed by individuals who could not be familiar with the current methods of operation, assets, or, if given favorable conditions, the potentialities of the organization. On the other hand, some rational questionings have been raised as to the propriety of the continuance of certain activities, such as liaison with foreign intelligence services, and semi-overt group activities in support of occupational forces.

Both the irresponsible criticism of the organization and the justifiable queries as to the appropriate nature and scope of its functions are causing indecision and delay respecting the future employment of SSU. The delay is serious. In the national interest, immediate and authoritative study should be given to the problem.

On 15 January 1946, I submitted to Major General S. LeRoy Irwin a statement of the assets of the SSU as of that date (Tab A). These assets are believed to be verifiable

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by an objective survey.

A sound appraisal of these assets by representatives of the members of the National Intelligence Authority should clarify the situation and expedite central employment of existing assets of the SSU, their placement elsewhere, or their orderly liquidation by the War Department.

Recommendations:

That, for the purpose of obtaining an early decision as to the appropriate disposition of the assets of the SSU, the Secretary of War request the immediate convening of a committee consisting of representatives of the members of the National Intelligence Authority to:

a. Obtain at the earliest practicable date an objective analysis of the functions and assets of the SSU and an appraisal of their value for employment operationally in the Central Intelligence Group.

b. To recommend to the National Intelligence Authority specific and prompt action based upon the committee's findings.

John Magruder
Brigadier General
Director

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