

1941

MEMORANDUM OF ESTABLISHMENT OF
SERVICE OF STRATEGIC INFORMATION

Strategy, without information upon which it can rely, is helpless. Likewise, information is useless unless it is intelligently directed to the strategic purpose. Modern warfare depends upon the economic base -- on the supply of raw materials, on the capacity and performance of the industrial plant, on the scope of agricultural production and upon the character and efficacy of communications. Strategic reserves will determine the strength of the attack and the resistance of the defense. Steel and gasoline constitute these reserves as much as do men and powder. The width and depth of terrain occupied by the present day army exacts an equally wide and deep network of operative lines. The "depth of strategy" depends on the "depth of armament."

The commitment of all resources of a nation, moral as well as material, constitute what is called total war. To anticipate enemy intention as to the mobilization and employment of these forces is a difficult task. General von Bernhardt says, "We must try, by correctly foreseeing, what is coming, to anticipate developments and thereby to gain an advantage which our opponents cannot overcome on the field of battle. That is what the future expects us to do."

Although we are facing imminent peril, we are lacking in effective service for analyzing, comprehending, and appraising such information as we might obtain (or in some cases have obtained), relative to the intention of potential enemies and the limit of the economic and military resources of those enemies. Our mechanism of collecting information is inadequate. It is true we have intelligence units in the Army and the Navy. We can assume that through these units our fighting services can obtain technical information in time of peace, have available immediate operational information in time of war, and, on certain occasions, obtain "spot" news as to enemy movements. But these services cannot, out of the very nature of things, obtain that accurate, comprehensive, long-range information without which no strategic board can plan for the future. And we have arrived at the moment when there must be plans laid down for the spring of 1942.

We have, scattered throughout the various departments of our Government, documents and memoranda concerning military and naval and air and economic potentials of the Axis which, if gathered together and studied in detail by carefully selected trained minds, with a knowledge both of the related languages and techniques, would yield valuable and often decisive results.

Critical analysis of this information is as presently important for our supply program as if we were actually engaged in armed conflict. It is unimaginable that Germany would engage in a \$7 billion supply program without first studying in detail the productive capacity of her actual and potential enemies. It is because she does exactly this that she displays such a mastery in the secrecy, timing and effectiveness of her attacks.

Even if we participate to no greater extent than we do now, it is essential that we set up a central enemy intelligence organization which would itself collect, either directly or through existing departments of Government, at home and abroad, pertinent information concerning potential enemies, the character and strength of their armed forces, their internal economic organization, their principal channels of supply, the morale of their troops and their people and their relations with their neighbors or allies.

For example, in the economic field there are many weapons that can be used against the enemy. But in our Government, these weapons are distributed through several different departments. How and when to use them is of vital interest not only to the Commander-in-Chief but to each of the departments concerned. All departments should have the same information upon which economic warfare could be determined.

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To analyze and interpret such information by applying to it not only the experience of Army and Naval officers, but also of specialized, trained research officials in the relative scientific fields (including technological, economic, financial and psychological scholars), is of determining influence in modern warfare.

Such analysis and interpretation must be done with immediacy and speedily transmitted to the intelligence services of those departments which, in some cases, would have been supplying the essential raw materials of information.

But there is another element in modern warfare, and that is the psychological attack against the moral and spiritual defenses of a nation. In this attack, the most powerful weapon is radio. The use of radio as a weapon, though effectively employed by Germany, is still to be perfected. But this perfection can be realized only by planning, and planning is dependent upon accurate information. From this information, action could be carried out by appropriate agencies.

The mechanism of this service to the various departments should be under the direction of a

Coordinator of Strategic Information, who would be responsible directly to the President. This Coordinator could be assisted by an advisory panel consisting of the Director of F.B.I., the Directors of the Army and Navy Intelligence Service, with corresponding officials from other Governmental departments principally concerned.

The attached chart shows the allocation of and the interrelation between the general duties to be discharged under the appropriate directors. Much of the personnel would be drawn from the Army and Navy and other departments of the Government, and it will be seen from the chart that the proposed centralized unit will neither displace nor encroach upon the FBI, Army and Navy Intelligence, or any other department of the Government.

The basic purpose of this Service of Strategic Information is to constitute a means by which the President, as Commander-in-Chief, and his Strategic Board would have available accurate and complete enemy intelligence reports upon which military operational decisions could be based.

William J. Donovan

Washington, D. C.

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