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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

4 December 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Allan Evans (OIR)
Colonel Gerald F. Lillard, USA (G-2)
Captain Allan L. Reed, USN (ONI)
Colonel Jack E. Thomas, USAF (AFOIN-2A)
Captain John A. Holbrook, USN (JIG)

SUBJECT : Post-Mortem: NIE-35/1, "Probable Developments in Indochina through Mid-1952", published 4 March 1952, and NIE-35/2, "Probable Developments in Indochina through Mid-1953", published 29 August 1952

REFERENCE : a. Procedure for Reducing Intelligence Deficiencies in NIE's, dated 3 June 1952

ENCLOSURE : A. List of Intelligence Deficiencies Revealed in the Preparation of NIE-35/1 and NIE-35/2

1. You will recall that last April, your representatives met with us and discussed a list of intelligence deficiencies which had been revealed in the preparation of NIE-35/1. (Office of National Intelligence memo dated 18 April, with Enclosures.)

2. The net result of these discussions were:

- a. A procedure was agreed upon (reference a);
- b. No formal action was taken on the list of deficiencies except to agree to their incorporation in the terms of reference to NIE-35/2; and
- c. Each agency informally undertook to take steps to improve the collection from the field to enable it to make more adequate contributions to NIE-35/2.

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3. We have now conducted a post-mortem on NIE-35/2 and find that no appreciable gains were discernible in filling previously identified gaps.

4. The enclosed list of deficiencies therefore bears a remarkable resemblance to the list discussed by your representatives last April.

5. The Board believes more positive steps need to be taken during the coming year to reduce the deficiencies in intelligence on Indochina. We are therefore submitting the attached list for your consideration and for subsequent discussion in accordance with established procedure.

6. Please have your representative meet with us at 10:00 Monday, December 15, in Room 146 South Building.



D/Asst. Director/Adm.

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ENCLOSURE "A"

LIST OF INTELLIGENCE DEFICIENCIES REVEALED IN THE PREPARATION
OF NIE-35/1 AND NIE-35/2
(in order of priority)

A. Viet Minh Developments

Although US intelligence obtains considerable intelligence  on the military, economic, and political situation in the Viet Minh, the quality of such intelligence is generally too low to support firm or conclusive estimates. This may be an insoluble problem because of the great difficulties involved in the collection process. Where at all possible, however, US estimates would profit from the following:

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1. More reliable intelligence concerning the Viet Minh manpower situation.
2. More reliable intelligence concerning the state of morale among the Viet Minh leadership and Army, and among the population within Viet Minh-controlled territory.
3. More reliable intelligence concerning the extent of consolidation of control over territories held by the Viet Minh; the political, economic and police instruments of control; the extent to which the regime is welcome and supported; the degree of power, if any, enjoyed by non-Communist Party leadership.
4. More reliable intelligence concerning the present role of Ho-Chi-Minh; the other important figures in the Viet Minh (backgrounds, responsibilities, etc.).
5. More reliable intelligence concerning the frictions, if any, which exist between the Viet Minh and the Chinese Communists; the effect of traditional Chinese-Indochinese ill-feeling; the existence, if any, of

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Viet Minh "nationalist," as distinguished from "Communist," aspirations; the displacing, if any, of indigenous leadership and influence by Chinese pressure or personalities.

6. More reliable intelligence concerning the relations, if any, between the Viet Minh and Soviets; the existence, if any, of frictions between Peiping and Moscow concerning superior influence over the Viet Minh.

B. Chinese Communist Developments

A situation somewhat similar to that discussed above exists as far as Chinese Communist support of the Viet Minh is concerned. There is here a greater quantity of reporting than there is on the Viet Minh itself, [redacted]

[redacted] reporting.

Again, however, the reliability of this intelligence is for the most part poor, although reports on developments within China are generally superior to those concerning Viet Minh territories. Where at all possible, US estimates would profit from the following:

1. More reliable intelligence concerning Chinese Communist "advisors" with the Viet Minh; the number, training, status, function, and influence of these people.
2. More reliable intelligence concerning Chinese Communist "volunteers," if any, with the Viet Minh; the number, method of integration, command relationships, training, status, function, and influence of these people.
3. More reliable intelligence concerning Chinese Communist capabilities with respect to Indochina: OB, transportation improvements, stockpiling, and air force and naval developments; economic capabilities for more active participation in Indochina.
4. More reliable intelligence concerning indications of Chinese Communist intentions with respect to Indochina.

C. French Developments

More reliable intelligence would be helpful concerning:

1. Indications of French intentions with respect to Indochina.

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2. Reported exploratory negotiations for some kind of "settlement" between French and Viet Minh, Chinese, and/or Soviet officials; if such negotiations have actually taken place, the nature of them; if they have not, the source of the rumors of such negotiations.

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