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EXEMPT NLK-81-122

25 JUN 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Special Group (CI)

SUBJECT : Intelligence Collection and
Evaluation in South Vietnam

1. This memorandum represents an assessment report made at my request by the CIA Chief of Station in Saigon concerning existing United States and GVN intelligence collection mechanisms together with an assessment of existing intelligence evaluation processes. The assessment of the intelligence collection process in South Vietnam as expressed by the COS Saigon has also been coordinated with appropriate members of my staff.

2. GVN Intelligence Mechanisms:

A. Central Intelligence Organization (CIO): This fledgling national intelligence service, [REDACTED] appears to present some hope for a professional, coordinated, evaluated approach to the intelligence problems facing the GVN. Basic concepts of analysis, collation, source controls and coordination will be incorporated in this organization. The CIO staff numbers less than

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100, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We are hopeful that the CIO will represent eventually an intelligence asset, but realistically we cannot expect professional results from it for a considerable period of time.

B. National Police and Security Service (NPSS): In addition to an overt collection function, NPSS is expanding, throughout the country, its special police branch for semi-covert intelligence operations, and is creating, [REDACTED] a special operations corps for VC penetration. On the whole, NPSS reporting has lacked good sourcing and coverage outside of Saigon, and needs a great deal of improving. The NPSS is frequently capable of detecting VC intentions within Saigon in advance, particularly regarding terrorist attacks. NPSS does have a studies bureau for the correlation of intelligence but the personnel are self-trained and generally not very competent.

C. Service des Etudes Politiques et Sociales (SEPESES): This is the political intelligence arm of the Presidency and is engaged in both collection and operations. However, we consider this service to be insecure, mismanaged, and filled with bureaucratic pettiness. It is not considered an effective

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tool for collection of intelligence on the VC.

D. Vietnamese Military Intelligence Service (J-2):

This service is improving under the guidance of American advisors but its intelligence product is still fragmentary, badly sourced and is often not disseminated with the speed necessary to make it tactically useful. The joint general staff remains reluctant to cooperate with other services and the CIO and these interservice disputes slow down and confuse dissemination. This organization's most serious deficiency is exploitation of prisoners, defectors and captured documents although there has been a small improvement in the field. The evaluative processes employed by J-2 are rudimentary and it is seldom possible for J-2 to identify the ultimate source in even routine reporting.

E. Vietnamese Military Security Service (MSS): In general, training of MSS officers has been good, and the service could, but does not, make a real contribution to the over-all GVN collection and evaluation effort. Its activities have been limited by Ngo Dinh Nhu to loyalty investigations of Vietnamese Army personnel and to the detection of VC within army ranks. The MSS has no effective intelligence evaluation center and is still steadfastly non-cooperative with the CIO. On the other hand, individual MSS field officers are often

3
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better qualified and more interested in intelligence correlation than the Vietnamese Army G-2 or the civilian security representation.

F. Vietnamese Army Special Telecommunications

Exploitation Service: This service is a part of the Joint General Staff and [REDACTED] it operates a studies bureau whose proficiency in locating some clandestine VC transmitters is improving. This bureau has prepared very practical and useful intelligence for use in planning attacks against VC transmitters. The studies bureau has also recently taken the initiative in interrogating and exploiting two VC defectors and the rapidity with which the defectors were made available for professional interrogation is a promising sign. The evaluative process of the studies bureau is good but is slow and limited.

3. United States Intelligence Organizations:

A. CIA: Although the CIA Station has expanded very rapidly over the past year, the majority of this expansion has been directed toward action projects in paramilitary and psychological warfare fields. Although the intelligence capability of the Station has improved in the past year [REDACTED]

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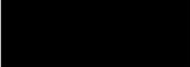
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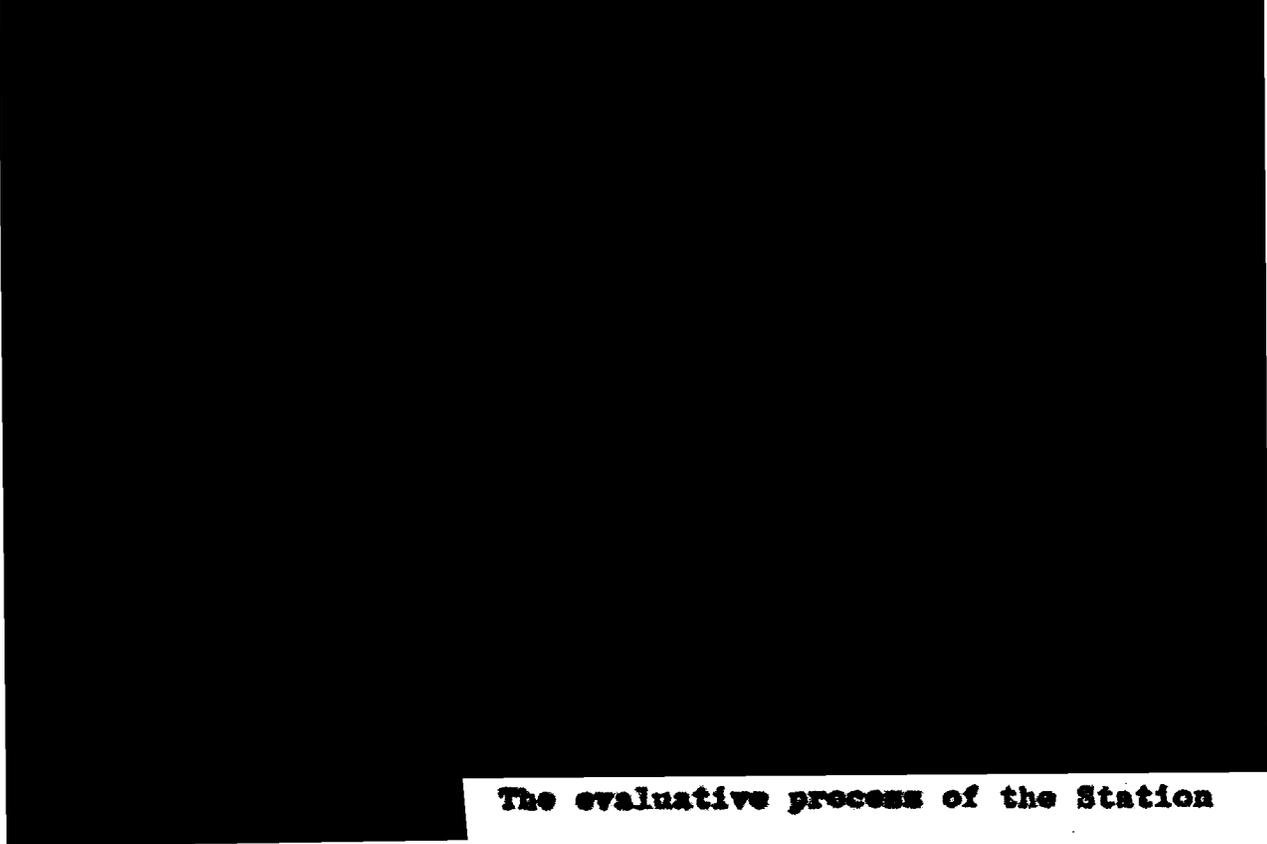
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 the collection capability of these personnel is not yet fully developed. The Station is making a major effort to improve the collection of intelligence 

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The evaluative process of the Station is generally very good primarily because of the presence at the Station of many officers with considerable experience in Vietnam and also because of the wide variety of contacts available to Station personnel.

B. J-2 USMACV: J-2 now has 130 personnel in Saigon headquarters and nearly 100 more American advisors in the

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provinces. It is doubtful if adding more United States military intelligence personnel would significantly increase the capabilities of this service.

C. CIC: Its mission is the security protection of USMACV and components, including the collection of information on significant military figures in the GVN and the VC, and the collection of data on civilians who may have aspirations toward the violent seizure of power. An important CIC activity is the briefing and debriefing of selected military advisors concerning their Vietnamese counterparts. CIC, with a staff of 30 officers, coordinates with the CIA Station regarding liaison with the GVN intelligence and security services.

D. The 500th Military Intelligence Group (MIG): This element of the United States Army's clandestine service is charged with regular reporting on political, military, and propaganda activities of the GVN and the VC. The sources of most of its information appear to derive from liaison with Vietnamese services and from a few agent contacts.

4. CIA Station Chief comments:

A. Intelligence on the VC is still unsatisfactory, particularly with reference to adequate sourcing, evaluation,

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collation, and timing. The most important failure in the system is the lack of GVN effective interservice coordination and the haphazard exploitation of prisoners and defectors. With respect to this latter point, interrogators are being trained, a CIO interservice interrogation center is under construction and improved interrogation guides in English and Vietnamese are being provided.

B. The presence of the American intelligence advisors now in each province, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] may help remedy defects on the Vietnamese side. This will, however, be a slow and arduous task. Where possible, the Station is encouraging establishment of provincial councils including representatives of all local United States and GVN services, operating under province chiefs.

C. Difficulties continue to exist in the flow of intelligence from the provinces into Saigon. A province chief, for example, who usually is a military officer has more than one information reporting channel; he may forward his information by direct communication to the Palace, avoiding any evaluation process, or he may submit it through military echelons to Saigon. By the latter means, his reporting will go through some evaluation process, but there remains the possibility

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that the province chief will submit less information through military channels.

D. The feasible pace of improvement within the GVN intelligence community depends on President Diem's willingness to make obviously needed changes at a risk, from his point of view, of steadily increasing United States influence within GVN military and internal security establishments. Diem apparently concurs fully in the need for a complete overhauling of the GVN intelligence community but he will continue to set the pace of change and the terms of liaison relationships, in accordance with his estimate of the degree to which United States influence within the internal security establishment poses a possible political threat to the stability of his regime. However, pressure on Diem to increase the pace of improvement would undoubtedly be interpreted by him as evidence of a United States desire to increase its influence in internal affairs, whereas a slower and steadier increase in the GVN intelligence capability, within politically palatable limits, may encourage him gradually to step up the pace. With the United States personnel now present and the plans now in

8

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process of implementation, it can be expected that the GVN intelligence structure should reach its improved capability by early 1963.

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