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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Indochina (Vietnam)

SUBJECT Vietnam National Army

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1. [redacted] various units of the Vietnam National Army in the field and in training.
2. They are, in general, a pretty sloppy bunch of soldiers--lazy, uninterested, badly trained, and unhappy. In the last year there has been progress and noticeable improvement. However, it is still considered a catastrophe to be drafted. The period of service for drafted men three or four years ago was 18 months. It is now three years and almost certain to be extended. Morale is very low.
3. The nationalist army is woefully short of officers, but one of the few bright spots in the picture is the Officers Candidate School at Dalat. [redacted] the calibre of the men much higher, [redacted] efficiency and enthusiasm.
4. The best of the native soldiers [redacted] were two battalions of Hoa Hao taken into the nationalist army in Dec 53. These people came from a religious/political group which controls large rice lands in South Vietnam. They are snappy, well-trained soldiers [redacted] these two battalions had changed sides five times since 1948, but [redacted] they were mercenaries in the true sense of the word and not Communists.

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