## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

There are a number of pitfalls inherent in a study of this nature, and we would like to reassure the reader of our awareness of these problems. In the first place, the review of INR and Vietnam is distilled from a vast number of INR papers over a period of nine years. Some distortion seems inevitable, but we have tried to keep it to a minimum. Moreover, although we use "INR" as the subject throughout, it must be borne in mind that "INR" constitutes different analysts, writing under changing leadership, with both components bringing to bear different perspectives and experiences. In addition, within the Bureau or the same Office, different analysts sometimes reached divergent judgments which were never fully harmonized. Thus some papers touching on the same subject in the same general time period may reflect these divergent views.

The study focuses almost exclusively on INR's analysis of the Vietnam problem and, thus, INR is the center of the paper by definition. We are not trying to imply that INR had a more significant role than it did in fact. Moreover, the reader must understand that INR was not directly involved in policy-making even though it may have had an impact on policy in varying degrees. The distinction is sometimes difficult to draw in an area such as Vietnam where such intelligence work involves assessing the effects, actual or potential, of policy decisions. INR, of course, had no control over how its intelligence products were used.

At the same time, we did not focus so exclusively on INR as to omit all reference to the views of others in the Intelligence Community and in policy-making circles. Where appropriate or noteworthy we have described them, and the absence of any reference to contrasting or concurring opinions does not mean that there was full agreement. More importantly, we recognize that others may feel that their views are not properly represented. These judgments have been made on the basis of some of the available documents of the time and, particularly, on the evidence of formal positions taken in National Intelligence Estimate sessions. Some distortion may be inevitable because we are working from limited sources. The same situation applies to our description of the views of policy makers. We recognize that what we have described may represent only a portion of their position or attitude.

Another important problem is that of subjective judgments on the part of the authors, W. Dean Howells and Dorothy R. Avery, who wrote the basic text, selected the excerpts for the annexes, and wrote the thematic summaries, and Fred Greene, who reviewed and revised this work and then wrote the critique. All worked in INR on aspects of the Vietnam problem at most of the crucial periods covered in this study. We have tried to be as objective as possible, bringing to bear our first-hand experience without letting it cloud our judgment. We also have attempted to present issues as they appeared at the time, and, although hindsight subconsciously may play a part in our treatment, we have endeavored to confine to the

Critique any judgments about INR's performance in light of the present. Obviously, the Critique, written by Mr. Greene but reviewed closely by Mrs. Avery and Mr. Howells, was the most difficult portion of the study to write. In the first place, while it is based in part on Mr. Greene's own experience, in large measure it rests on the basic text which may perforce contain distortions. Further, it is often difficult to assess the INR position because different circumstances than envisaged in the original analysis may have developed. We have endeavored to note these instances. In addition, and though obvious it must be stated, the verdict of history has yet to be given on a number of basic issues in the conflict. Thus, the study is offered as a tentative but, we believe, the most objective possible effort to review and assess INR's analysis of major facets of the Vietnam conflict.

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SOURCE

Note on Sources:

This study traces INR's judgments and projections on the course of events in Vietnam from the spring of 1961 through December 1968. It reviews an extensive and representative selection of papers produced or contributed to by INR--with few exceptions by the Office of Research and Analysis for East Asia and Pacific (REA). The memoranda were selected because they focused on the basic problems--how stable was the political situation in South Vietnam, how well was the war going, what were Communist intentions and reactions to allied actions, and what were the prospects for negotiations. REA (or RFE, as it was known until 1967) also produced numerous other papers on aspects of the Vietnam situation, which have not been used because they did not deal directly with these primary problems. In addition, certain REA memoranda on negotiations were based on highly sensitive material and have been omitted from this survey.

Of the analyses of the Soviet position produced by the Office of Research on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (RSE), only very few were used, partly because time was limited and partly because most of those papers did not bear directly on the particular aspects of the situation which were being emphasized. For the same reasons, memoranda produced by INR's other geographic offices were reviewed but not brought into the main stream of this presentation. Studies produced in RCI were used selectively, primarily to clarify what INR had thought about infiltration and Chinese or Sino-Vietnamese military activity related to the war. Most fugitive of INR's products, the daily Briefing Items doubtless

contained some points that were not identical with those treated in more formal reports, but it was judged that the time required to exploit this extensive material would not be justified by the additional insights that might result.