

Prologue



OSS Emblem

During the Pacific campaigns late in World War II, the United States Office of Strategic Services (OSS) supported Ho Chi Minh in his guerrilla war against the occupying Imperial Japanese Army in French Indochina. The United States of America's relationship with Ho, the Vietnamese nationalist and hardcore Communist, is one of most unusual, and largely unknown, episodes of the war. This American support was the seed for major, international political, military, and cultural events that roiled Southeast Asia in the era after World War II.

The OSS was the United States' senior intelligence agency during World War II. The Director of the OSS was General William J. "Wild Bill" Donovan, a Medal of Honor recipient for exemplary action in France during World War I.



Ho Chi-Minh



**General William J.
Donovan**

Military and intelligence officials devised various scenarios to precipitate the fall of the Japanese Empire. One of singular import was to deprive the Imperial Japanese Army and its industrial base of the critical raw materials from Southeast Asia they needed to prosecute the war. Another was to keep large elements of the Japanese Army committed in local engagements in the littoral regions and out of the Pacific Ocean war zone.

Donovan made the strategic decision to accomplish these two goals concurrently in Southeast Asia by supporting Ho Chi Minh's guerilla campaign with all manner of military, medical, and communication equipment, as well as technical advisors.

To set the stage for a critical understanding of this vitally important event, let's review briefly the affairs that preceded it.